



THE ADVENTURES
OF
BRENDA STARR

Screenplay

By

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THE ADVENTURES
OF
BRENDA STARR

FADE IN:

OPENING SEQUENCE - BEFORE TITLES

EXT. SKYSCRAPER - CHICAGO - DAY

START CLOSE on a DESPERATE YOUNG MAN, standing on a ledge high up over the city, ready to jump.

MAN

(to the world)

It's no use, I have nothing to live for...

QUICK CUTS of crowds on the sidewalk looking up, shouting... would-be rescuers on the roof above him, tense, frantic.

MAN

(moaning)

It's no use, I have nothing to live for...

Police, firemen, priests, lean out of the windows pleading with the guy. Over these shots, the SOUND of a HELICOPTER COMING CLOSER. The man peers down at the dizzying depths.

CROWD

No!...Don't jump!

MAN

(cries out)

It's no use, I have nothing to live for...

The crowd screams with apprehension. Then the man looks up. We see the sky from his point of view. Coming down from the sky and into the frame, seated on a canvas sling at the end of a rope dangling from the helicopter, is BRENDA STARR, a breathtaking vision, coming closer and closer.

BRENDA

(calls out)

I'm from the Flash. I want to talk to you.

CLOSE SHOT of the man, eyes widening with interest.

MAN

It's no use, I have nothing to live for...

CLOSE SHOT of Brenda smiling at him.

BRENDA

Say that again.

CLOSE SHOT of the man, expression changing.

MAN

It's no use, I just changed my mind.

And he clambers to safety through an open window, as the crowd cheers and Brenda soars away, acknowledging the plaudits.

ON COMES THE TITLE

And the CREDITS CONTINUE OVER A SERIES OF FRONT PAGE HEADLINES IN THE FLASH (with a montage of STILL SHOTS OF BRENDA highlighting the stories indicated by the headlines):

BRENDA STARR DECLINES REPUBLICAN NOMINATION
"Maybe in 1996," she says.

WORLD HAILS JOURNALIST'S
MIDDLE EAST PEACE PACT
Brenda Starr: "Kissinger was a redhead too, but my hair is longer."

PRESIDENT DENIES BRENDA STARR RUMOURS
"I just looked at her, that's all."

BEAUTIES UP IN ARMS AS REPORTER
ACCIDENTALLY WINS MISS WORLD PAGEANT
Brenda Starr: "I was only up there to interview the girls."

SHIEKS LOWER WORLD PRICE OF OIL
AFTER REPORTER'S TOUR OF ARAB STATES
Brenda Starr: "There are more ways than one to fight inflation."

NEWSWOMAN TO ADDRESS U.N. ON
EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT
Brenda Starr: "They've earned it -- it's time men got it."

TITLES CLEAR

INT. OFFICE OF HORACE (MUGGS) WALTERS - THE FLASH - CHICAGO - DAY

MUGGS WALTERS, Editor in Chief of THE FLASH, an irascible, profane man of fifty, is giving Brenda a tongue-lashing. She is her usual imperturbable, unflappable, soft, feminine, controlled, beautiful self (ONE OF BRENDA'S OUTSTANDING BEHAVIORISMS IS THAT, NO MATTER

HOW FLIP, OR CYNICAL, OR SARCASTIC, OR SUBTLY DEROGATORY
HER WORDS WOULD SEEM, COMING FROM ANOTHER, SHE IS SO TOTALLY
 PLEASANT, INGENUOUS, INNOCENT AND ARTLESS IN HER DELIVERY OF
 SUCH REMARKS, THAT SHE NEVER NEVER COMES ACROSS AS BITING OR
 SHARP-TONGUED. SHE LOVES THE WORLD AND EVERYONE IN IT...AND
 IF THE RECIPIENT OF HER BARBS FEELS STUNG, BRENDA WOULD BE
 MOST SURPRISED TO HEAR ABOUT IT).

MUGGS

I'm sick and tired of you being the story
 instead of getting the story...

BRENDA

(agreeably)

You're so right, Mr. Walters. I just can't
 seem to help it. I keep falling into these
 things.

MUGGS

Well fall out of them, God damn it.

BRENDA

(sighs)

If only our readers didn't like my adventures.

MUGGS

Of course they do, and they shouldn't. They
 should be concerning themselves with the
 important issues of the day, inflation,
 starvation, unemployment, the arms race...

BRENDA

My cousin Abretha claims they're much more
 interested in who is doing you-know-what to
 whom.

MUGGS

I'm trying to run a responsible newspaper
 for responsible citizens, not some goddam
 scandal sheet.

BRENDA

(naively)

I don't suppose circulation has gone up since
 I joined the Flash, has it, Mr. Walters?

MUGGS

(shrewdly)

You know damned well it has.

BRENDA

(wide-eyed)

Oh really? How much?

MUGGS
(uncomfortable)

I don't know. A million, maybe more.

BRENDA
And advertising rates?

MUGGS
(trapped)
Up, God damn it...up.

BRENDA
(calmly)
I wish you wouldn't swear at me so much, Mr. Walters. I'll get too rattled to ask for a raise.

MUGGS
A what?

BRENDA
A raise...and a much larger expense account too.

MUGGS
I called you in here to paddle your ass and you're hitting me for more money? Are you out of your mind?

BRENDA
(most reasonably)
I'm only thinking of the paper, Mr. Walters. I can't go traipsing all over the world to all the best places and hobnob with all the beautiful people unless I can afford to go first class all the way...

MUGGS
Who the hell asked you to traipse?

BRENDA
I go wherever the stories are, wherever they lead me, and I don't ever want to have to lose the trail because of some silly limitation on the amount of money I can spend.

MUGGS
(eyes narrowing)
Are you hinting at an unlimited expense account?

BRENDA
I always prefer to be up front...

MUGGS
Don't worry, you're plenty up front.

BRENDA
...At the Globe, I wouldn't have to hint.

MUGGS
Don't blackmail me, Brenda Starr. I've got the finest woman reporter in the world on this paper by the name of Hank O'Hair. How come she isn't handing in bills from Norman Meekus--?

BRENDA
(calmly)
Neiman Marcus.

MUGGS
--And Ives Saint Lawrence--

BRENDA
(gently)
Yves St. Laurent.

MUGGS
How come Hank O'Hair isn't spending us blind at Christmas Dior and Bergdorf Goldwyn?

BRENDA
(admiringly)
She doesn't have to. She's got a mind.

MUGGS
Ahh hah, you finally admit it. And whadda you got?

BRENDA
A raise, and an unlimited expense account.
She starts away.

MUGGS
Wait a minute...

BRENDA
(politely)
I'd love to stay, Mr. Walters, if I thought there was a story here.

MUGGS

I've got a story for you, dammit. Why do you think I called you in here? I want you to cover a costume ball at the Arthur Paddington mansion tonight...

BRENDA

The chewing gum tycoon?

MUGGS

For one week now we've been trying to find out if their hell-raising daughter, Jennifer Paddington, is really gonna marry that pitiful poet, Dylan something or other, but no one has seen Jennifer or heard of her, nothing, like she's dropped out of sight or something, and tonight just may be the night she announces the engagement.

BRENDA

(pleasantly)

No thanks.

MUGGS

Whaddaya mean no thanks?

BRENDA

Not my cup of tea. Give it to Society. They'll know how to do it right.

MUGGS

See here young lady, I'll decide what kind of tea you drink around here, not you. It's the kind of story you should be doing, the kind you're suitable for. With a body and a puss like yours, why do you insist on trying to do a man's job all the time, huh, huh?

BRENDA

(sweetly)

Seeking out the truth comes naturally to a woman, Mr. Walters, especially in a man's world filled with liars.

MUGGS

I oughta send you back to the Missouri School of Journalism where I found you...

BRENDA

Wisconsin.

MUGGS

Here's the invitation with all the details. Don't come back from that ball empty-handed. Understood?

BRENDA

I understand you perfectly, Mr. Walters...
always.

Muggs is not sure he likes that last remark, as Brenda walks out.

INT. CITY ROOM OF THE FLASH

As Brenda walks through the large, bustling City Room, tapping typewriters fall silent and reporters' heads turn. SOFT WOLF WHISTLES are HEARD, and several MALE VOICES CHORUS "There she goes...Miss America..." Over her shoulder Brenda delivers a friendly "Buzz off." And goes into her office.

INT. BRENDA'S OFFICE

Freckle-faced, seventeen-year-old copy boy PESKY MILLER is waiting.

PESKY

(brightly)

Hi, Brenda...

BRENDA

(sadly)

Oh Pesky...

PESKY

What is it? I can't stand it when you sound unhappy.

BRENDA

Muggs Walters is trying to bury me away on the society page.

PESKY

That old fool. Someday he'll appreciate you, like everyone else around here does.

BRENDA

Everyone else around here is a male chauvinist pig.

PESKY

Not true. I overheard Tom Taylor saying that in the field of investigative journalism, you're the nicest pair since Woodward and Bernstein.

BRENDA

You're a dear, Pesky. So sweet and innocent.

PESKY

You wouldn't think so if you knew how I felt about you.

Brenda is standing at the window, gazing out idly as Pesky continues talking OVER SHOTS OF BRENDA LOOKING OUT ACROSS THE STREET, INTERCUT WITH SHOTS OF WHAT SHE SEES:

PESKY'S VOICE

(O.S.)

My Mom says I've gotta start thinking about girls my own age, but there's no way I'm gonna do that until you get married. I've got it all figured out -- when that unhappy day comes, I'm gonna go into mourning for at least a month, and then I'm gonna hang out with the guys, only guys, for a few more months, before I even look at another girl. Who knows, I may even enter a monastery...

Brenda has been letting out little exclamations, half aloud ("Oh my...good heavens...oh...OH...") SHE IS WATCHING TWO MEN IN AN OFFICE IN THE BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET. One of the men, WHO IS WEARING A WHITE SUIT, comes up behind the other, who is seated at his desk, and clamps a cloth over the man's face. The victim slumps over. Now the man in the white suit drags the semi-conscious man over to the OPEN WINDOW, pulls him up to a standing position, and STARTS TO PUSH HIM OUT OF THE WINDOW.

Brenda shrieks.

PESKY

Have I said something?

BRENDA'S HANDS (IN CLOSEUP) ARE WORKING A MICROMINI CAMERA THAT HANGS AROUND HER NECK DISGUISED AS A PENDANT.

THE VICTIM (FROM HER POINT OF VIEW) SAILS OUT OF THE WINDOW, PLUMMETS DOWN TEN STORIES, AND LANDS ON TOP OF A PARKED CAR, CRUMPLING THE ROOF OF THE CAR.

Brenda turns, grabs her shoulder bag from the desk, and dashes out of the office crying:

BRENDA

Turn the beeper on and keep it on!

INT. CITY ROOM, CORRIDOR, ELEVATOR, MAIN FLOOR LOBBY

Brenda runs through the City Room, across the corridor, into the elevator, out of the elevator on the main floor, across the lobby and out to the street.

EXT. STREET

Across the street, crowds are converging on the crumpled car with the lifeless body sprawled on it. Brenda rushes to the curb, SEES everyone hurrying TOWARDS the scene of disaster...everyone except one lone figure who is walking casually AWAY from the scene, away from the entrance to the office building. THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT. STAYING ON HER SIDE OF THE STREET, Brenda follows the man (through a SERIES OF CUTS that take them for several blocks). The man, WHO IS CARRYING AN ATTACHE CASE, disappears into the entrance to a hotel. Brenda follows him inside.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY .

Brenda sees the man, who has red hair and a smooth face, open another door and go in. She goes up to the door and stops short. It is the Men's Room. She sits down in a clubchair facing the door and watches the door intently. Reaching into her shoulder bag, she takes out a very small Walkie Talkie.

INT. CITY ROOM OF THE FLASH & BRENDA'S OFFICE

Pesky Miller reacts as he hears the BEEPER in his pocket sounding. He hurries to BRENDA'S OFFICE, leans over a TWO-WAY RADIO on her desk and throws a switch.

PESKY

BS from PM. Go.

BRENDA'S VOICE (on radio)

Tell Muggs to hold the front page,
then standby.

PESKY

Roger Roger.

He runs out of the office.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

Brenda sees a man carrying an attache case emerging from the Men's Room. He has a moustache, black hair, sunglasses, and wears a long raincoat. But below the raincoat, his trousers are WHITE. Brenda rises, watches the man enter a coffee shop off the lobby. Brenda goes up to a window of the coffee shop in the lobby and peers in.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

The man is SEEN placing his raincoat and attache case on a chair, and sitting down at the table in the adjacent chair.

Brenda enters the coffee shop. She moves towards the kitchen, going behind the man, who is peering at the menu. We stay on the man at the table. Presently, a WAITRESS appears in the shot.

WAITRESS

May I help you?

CAMERA PANS UP. We see that it is Brenda, wearing a ruffled hat and apron like the other waitresses. The man is about to order when Brenda suddenly leans down and removes his shades, saying:

BRENDA

Let me clean these.

MAN

(furious)

What the hell are you doing?

BRENDA

There we are.

She holds the glasses out. He snatches them from her. As he does so, Brenda quickly snaps several shots of him with the micromini camera hanging from her neck.

MAN

(grumbles)

I'll have a Reuben sandwich and a cup of coffee.

BRENDA

Certainly.

Brenda quickly picks up the raincoat and attache case from the chair saying:

BRENDA
I'll check these for you, sir.

MAN
(half-rising)
Never mind. Just--

But Brenda is already walking away with the case and the coat, moving swiftly towards the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

Brenda enters, goes up to a uniformless WAITRESS who is holding Brenda's shoulder bag.

BRENDA
(quickly)
Reuben sandwich and coffee.

WAITRESS
Thank you, Miss Starr.

BRENDA
Thank you, sister.

Brenda gives back the ruffled cap and the apron, takes her shoulder bag, and hurries out through the back entrance, raincoat and attache case in hand.

INT. MOVING CAB - DAY

Brenda is talking into her tiny radio.

BRENDA
The alleged murderer was identified, through papers found in the attache case, as Marty (The Shove) Stutch, suspected of being a hit man for Antonio (The Pig) Mazzarini, notorious Chicago bookmaker. No connection has yet been established linking Stutch or Mazzarini to the murdered man... Pesky, fill in the victim's name, I'll be there in about four minutes, don't forget to alert the photolab.

INT. BRENDA'S OFFICE - DAY

Pesky Miller has tiny earphones on as he pounds away at Brenda's typewriter.

PESKY
Gotcha...gotcha...

He rips the paper out of the typewriter, yanks off the earphones and goes out to:

INT. CITY ROOM

On his way through the room, Pesky stops beside the desk of HANK O'HAIR, a mannish woman reporter who is reading a proof of her story.

PESKY
Miss O'Hair, what was the name of that guy who went out the window?

HANK
The suicide?

PESKY
Yeah.

HANK
Victor Kochenko. Gambled on the ponies with other people's money and came in dead last. Open and shut case.

PESKY
Another scoop for Hank O'Hair, huh?

HANK
That's what I get paid for, kiddo.

Pesky scribbles the name in on Brenda's story, pokes his head into THE PHOTOLAB.

PESKY
Clear the decks for you know who.

Pesky goes OUT TO THE ELEVATORS just as Brenda steps out of one. She takes the story from him, glances over it as she hurries ACROSS THE CITY ROOM, Pesky trotting at her side.

PESKY
The way I see it, Brenda, Kochenko couldn't pay the bookies so they had him rubbed out by your friend in the white suit.

BRENDA
Good seeing, sonny boy. You're going to be the competition some day.

She removes her "pendant", and hands it to Pesky.

BRENDA

There are about ten shots in there. Tell the lab to be very careful. It's the evidence that will hang Marty Stutch.

INT. MUGGS WALTER'S OFFICE

Brenda barges in, ignoring the fact that he is in a meeting with two men.

BRENDA

Sorry, gentlemen, this can't wait.

MUGGS

Can't you even knock?

Brenda tosses the story at Muggs, who takes it and reads it.

BRENDA

Pictures of the actual murder and closeups of the murderer should be out of the lab in fifteen minutes. And here's a little physical evidence I stole from the nasty man just to give the police something to play with.

She tosses the raincoat and the attache case on the desk and starts away.

MUGGS

What's your hurry? Where are you going?

BRENDA

(earnestly)

To that society ball you're sending me to, to get the kind of story you think I'm suitable for.

Out she goes.

MUGGS

Fresh kid.

He flips a switch on the intercom.

MUGGS

Desk? Walters. Kill Hank O'Hair's story...Because I got a better one, that's why. Now do as I say, God damn it.

INT. BRENDA'S PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

Brenda lives in the apartment with her fat cousin, ABRETHA BREEZ, a rather hard-bitten woman of 32. Brenda is dressing for the ball. Or should one say "undressing"? Whenever she's at home, Brenda feels most comfortable prancing about in the briefest and filmiest lingerie, favoring very short chemises and very high-heeled sandals. She's moving about now, hair wrapped in a Turkish towel, getting ready to put on her costume while cousin Abretha hovers over her doing nothing but fretting (and, incidentally, making frequent passes at a bowl of almonds and peanuts).

ABRETHA

Aren't you scared, Brenda? He might be after you right now. He could have found out it was you impersonating a waitress, you who stole his briefcase--

BRENDA

I don't understand it, Abretha. People who worry as much as you are supposed to be thin.

ABRETHA

One of these days, my smart little cousin, your luck is going to run out, so let me say it now, while you're still alive: I told you so.

Brenda laughs.

BRENDA

When the midnight edition comes out, he'll be out of circulation before he even knows what's hit him.

Brenda picks up the remote TV control and clicks the set on.

NEWSCASTER

...landing on top of a parked car and narrowly missing pedestrians on the sidewalk. The consensus at police headquarters is that Kochenko was despondent over heavy gambling debts, and saw no way out but to leap to his death. He leaves no survivors, except, one presumes, some very...disgruntled...bookmakers...Elsewhere in the news--

Brenda clicks the set off.

BRENDA

Oh dear, I hate to be the cause of so many red faces when my story appears.

ABRETHA

Don't try to fool the fat lady, Brenda.
You love it. You live for it.

BRENDA

(wistfully)

I know, I know...But why, Abretha, why?
I couldn't stop if I wanted to...

ABRETHA

Because you're still trying to please
your Daddy, who isn't even alive anymore.
Just because he was the greatest newspaperman
Chicago ever knew doesn't mean he wanted you
to be...

BRENDA

He'd be proud of me, Abretha..

ABRETHA

He'd be just as proud if you met some
nice guy and got married and had kids
as beautiful as you are...

BRENDA

Beautiful...beautiful...that's all I ever
hear...as though I've done something to
earn it.

ABRETHA

Don't knock it. I look at you and I
wanna eat my heart out.

BRENDA

Of course...You'll eat anything.

ABRETHA

Have you no respect for my tragic existence?

BRENDA (kisses her)

I'm sorry, dear. Help me into this silly
costume, will you?

ABRETHA

What do you need me for? Just pour
yourself into it.

EXT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Brenda emerges from the building to the sidewalk and asks the
doorman to get her a cab. She is dressed in a stunning PIRATE
COSTUME: black hat, black boots, tattered mini skirt with a

bold sash, white silk blouse, and a black eye-mask (which she will put on later). Now we see THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT -- Marty Stutch -- seated behind the wheel of a car parked across the street from the entrance. He is watching Brenda as she stands waiting. A cab arrives. Brenda gets in. The cab pulls away. And the man in the white suit starts after her.

EXT. PADDINGTON MANSION - NIGHT

Brenda's cab pulls up before the impressive mansion. Brenda gets out and goes inside, first putting on her mask. Stutch is seen clambering out of his car across the street and going to the entrance to the mansion. Crowds are milling about inside, most of them in costume, all of them masked.

INT. PADDINGTON MANSION

At the entrance, a SOCIALITE type woman sits behind a table with guest lists, frowning up at Marty Stutch.

SOCIALITE

I'm sorry, sir. Nobody is allowed inside without a mask. Mrs. Paddington's fussy about that.

STUTCH

Whaddaya want me to do? I forgot it.

SOCIALITE

May I see your invitation?

STUTCH

You don't know me? I'm Mrs. Paddington's brother.

The socialite looks at him uncertainly. Then she takes a mask out of a basket and hands it to him.

SOCIALITE

Be sure to return it.

Stutch slips the mask on and goes inside.

INT. POWDER ROOM OF MANSION

Brenda enters, glances about at the other women -- and suddenly finds herself face to masked face with a blonde in the ALMOST IDENTICAL COSTUME (Her name is BELLE).

BELLE

(acidly)

One of us is not very original.

BRENDA
 (apologetically)
 I'm sorry. Shall I take mine off?

BELLE
 And get us all trampled to death?

Belle goes out, and Brenda glances around at the other women again.

BRENDA
 Has anyone here seen Jennifer Paddington?
 No answer. The women are too busy examining themselves in the mirrors.

INT. BALLROOM OF MANSION

The room is jammed and disco-lit by flashing, multi-colored lights. The music is pounding and ear-splitting. Marty Stutch prowls among the costumed, gyrating dancers, eyes searching. ACROSS THE ROOM IN THE FOYER, he sees a figure that appears to be Brenda. He makes his way through the crowds, comes up to the pirate-costumed woman and takes her by the arm.

STUTCH
 Let's you and me get away from all this, huh, baby?

The woman yanks her arm free.

WOMAN
 Sorry, I'm here with someone.

It's Belle, not Brenda, but Stutch doesn't know that. He takes her arm again in a firm grasp and moves her forcibly towards the entrance.

BELLE
 Hey, wait a minute, who the hell do you think you are?

STUTCH
 I think I'm Mrs. Paddington's brother.

BELLE
 (to anyone who will listen)
 Somebody help me. This guy is kidnapping me.

A girl and her guy laugh at Belle.

GIRL

You're a pirate. Kidnap him back.

BELLE
(frantic)

I mean it.

Stutch moves Belle swiftly towards the entrance.

ENTERING THE BALLROOM, Brenda wanders about, searching for her quarry. A tall young MAN comes up to her.

MAN

Hello, lovely lady. You seem to be looking for someone...and here I am.

BRENDA

If you're Jennifer Paddington, you should go to a throat specialist.

MAN

Don't let this voice fool you, honey. I can go in either direction.

BRENDA
(pointing to the
door)

How about thataway?

She walks away from him, moves from one conversational group to another, not finding whom she is seeking. ANOTHER MAN, large and beefy, takes her by the hand and leads her into the maelstrom of disco dancers and, like it or not, Brenda finds herself doing a cousin of The Hustle. As she and the man gyrate face to face:

BEEFY MAN

What's a luscious thing like you doing in a place like this?

BRENDA

Looking for Jennifer Paddington.

BEEFY MAN

Who's she?

BRENDA

Only the daughter of our host and hostess.

BEEFY MAN

Oh, so that's who's throwing this bash.

BRENDA
Who did you think?

BEEFY MAN
No idea. Wasn't invited. I always
carry a mask with me just in case I
should stumble onto one of these
things.

BRENDA
And you always wear a clown costume too?

BEEFY MAN
Why shouldn't I? I am a clown.

BRENDA
I never would have known.

BEEFY MAN
How would you like to come up to my
tent and roll around in the sawdust
a little?

BRENDA
I'd love to, but I'm allergic to
animals.

BEEFY MAN
Animals? What animals?

Brenda "accidentally" trips the man and he lands on the floor
on his derriere.

BRENDA
The kind that dress like clowns.

She walks away, and the man sits there on the dance floor
looking after her.

INT. MARTY STUTCH'S CAR IN MOTION - NIGHT

Stutch, grim-faced, is driving. Sitting beside him is
Belle, the irate pirate, protesting bitterly.

BELLE
I'm not Brenda Starr, you stupid son of
a bitch.

STUTCH
Shutup.

BELLE

It's very important that I get back to that party immediately, do you hear me?

STUTCH

One more peep outta you and I'm gonna fasten that seat belt over your mouth.

INT. PADDINGTON MANSION

Brenda has left the dance floor, is moving beyond the dancers, glancing about, still searching. Suddenly, looking across the room, she SEES someone, comes to a stop and reacts with unusual excitement as she stares across the room.

BRENDA'S P.O.V.

Standing facing Brenda on the far side of the room, occasionally blocked from view by passersby, is A HANDSOME, DARK-HAIRED YOUNG MAN WEARING A FLOWING BLACK CAPE AND A BLACK EYE-PATCH OVER ONE EYE. He seems to be gazing across at Brenda with the same excitement that we have seen on her face.

BRENDA

Moving as though impelled by some outside force, she starts across the room towards the man in the black cape and the eye-patch, pushing people aside, keeping her gaze fixed straight ahead (and SEEING THE MAN IN FLEETING GLIMPSES BETWEEN OTHER GUESTS, IN QUICK P.O.V. SHOTS). When she gets to the other side of the room, she comes to a stop, and a look of bewilderment comes to her face. She glances about (and in a SWEEPING P.O.V.), SEES no one even resembling the man. It is as though he had been an apparition. But Brenda does not give up immediately. She moves on, away from the revelers, glancing about in search of the black-caped young man, finding herself now in the farther reaches of the great house as she looks for the man in vain. Passing a closed door, she HEARS THE SOUND OF A WOMAN WEEPING, and MEN'S VOICES. Her reporter's instincts take over. Though she has been led here by her vision of a handsome stranger, she is now all business. She puts her ear to the door, listens, tries the doorknob. The door is locked. She goes on to the next closed door, opens it, enters a small sitting room, goes beyond it to a LAVATORY, which has another door connecting elsewhere. Brenda opens that door slightly, and finds herself looking into a library, and hearing what is being said there.

INT. LIBRARY

ARTHUR and MARTHA PADDINGTON, fifty years old and imperiously rich, are with TWO MEN IN DARK SUITS. One of the men is seated at a table and has a set of earphones at the ready on his head. The earphones are connected to a sophisticated electronic device that is attached to the telephone. Mrs. Paddington is on the sofa, sobbing.

MRS. PADDINGTON

Why haven't they called? It's twenty minutes past the hour. They're never going to call...

PADDINGTON

(exasperated)

Martha, get hold of yourself, will you? The house is crawling with people, just to keep up this pretense that everything is normal. But you're going to give it away with your hysterics and your hand-wringing. Everything is going to be all right.

MRS. PADDINGTON

No it's not, we'll never see Jenny again...

In the doorway, Brenda reacts to this.

MRS. PADDINGTON

...They've probably done away with her.

PADDINGTON

(to the men)

Christ, I don't know what to do with her.

MAN

(sympathetically)

It's perfectly normal, sir. If I were you--

Just then, the TELEPHONE RINGS. They all spring to attention. The electronic device is turned on. Paddington picks up the phone.

PADDINGTON

Hello?...Yes, this is Arthur Paddington...
What?...This is a bad connection. What?...
Yes...Yes...I understand. But can't you give us some words of reassurance, something for Mrs. Paddington to live on until this is over? She's terribly upset...I'm doing everything I

PADDINGTON

(cont.)

can about that, but it's getting increasingly difficult. How long do you think I can keep the newspapers from getting wind of this? And once they do, the police will be all over the place, and I'll have no control over anything... Wait a minute now, don't hang up. I have a new offer. It is absolutely my best and my final offer. I am willing to go up to three million dollars, deposited to any numbered account you designate, in Zurich or Geneva...Well why can't you give me an answer now?...All right. Twenty-four hours. We'll be right here waiting. But I'm warning you, I must hear my daughter's voice. How do I know she's alive? How do I know you've got her?...Hello?...Hello?...

He hangs up, turns to the others.

PADDINGTON

I'm optimistic. I think they'll accept. I'm really optimistic.

MRS. PADDINGTON

(wails)

I want to see my Jenny!...

PADDINGTON

You will, Martha, you will.

One of the blue-suited men removes his earphones.

MAN

The pattern is clear and consistent. Another number, another public telephone, but the same city...Megève.

MRS. PADDINGTON

Megève...poor little Jenny. It's so cold in the French Alps. And I'll bet she's got nothing on underneath.

PADDINGTON

(sourly)

Does she ever?

Brenda quietly withdraws, and hurries purposefully THROUGH THE HOUSE on her way to the entrance. Passing THROUGH THE BALLROOM with its whirling dancers and flashing lights, Brenda

is suddenly stopped by A MAN IN MASK AND COSTUME, CARRYING A LARGE BLACK VELVET SACK. He grabs Brenda by the arm and speaks with quick urgency.

MAN

Where the devil have you been? We're way behind schedule. Take this and get ready. I'm going to make the announcement now.

He thrusts the sack into the hands of the dumbfounded Brenda and walks away from her. She sees him closing the two doors that lead to the ballroom (and locking them). Then he goes over to the bandleader and signals him to bring the number to a quick finish. The music dies. The dancers come to a disappointed halt. And the man seizes the microphone and addresses the room:

MAN

Ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention please. Thank you. My right hand, as you can see, is in my pocket. It is holding something which I trust I will not have to use tonight. None of you will be hurt, or suffer even the mildest discomfort, if you follow my instructions.

Someone calls out: "Sit down, that's not funny."

MAN

(cont.)

The doors to this room have been locked, and circulating among you are several of my colleagues who have the means to be quite nasty with you if you give them cause, so I ask you not to. Please put your attention on that delightful young lady in the pirate costume standing over there with the velvet sack in her hands. In order for you to have a closer look at her, I want each and every one of you, man and woman, to go over to her, take off every single piece of jewelry you're wearing, including wristwatches, and deposit everything in the sack. Don't push, don't shove, don't complain, and don't try to hide anything, and before long you'll all be dancing again. Maestro? A little music please?

The orchestra begins to play "I'm Dancing With Tears In My Eyes" as the grumbling, disgruntled partygoers, stripping off their jewelry, move towards the wide-eyed Brenda.

MALE PARTYGOER

(to Brenda)

This better turn out to be one of
Paddington's jokes...

BRENDA

There's a terrible mistake being made
here--

MALE PARTYGOER

You can say that again.

BRENDA

--But I think you better do as the man
says.

A woman drops many sparklers, one by one, into the sack.

WOMAN

Thirty-five thousand dollars worth of
junk. I can't wait to collect the insurance.

MALE PARTYGOER #2

This wristwatch is a sentimental keepsake
from my wife. Can I keep it?

BRENDA

Better tell her to get you another.

MALE PARTYGOER #2

She can't. Her boyfriend would kill her.

INT. MARTY STUTCH'S CAR IN MOTION - NIGHT

The auto is now speeding ALONG THE WATERFRONT. Belle is
still protesting loudly.

BELLE

You have gotten me into big trouble, mister.
I've missed a very...important...evening.

STUTCH

You're gonna miss all your evenings if
you don't talk when I get you where we're
going.

BELLE

Talk? That's all I've been doing. But you
won't listen, you dummy. I'm telling you,
you got the wrong girl. I'm not Brenda Starr.

STUTCH
Shutup. I'm tired of hearing you.

INT. PADDINGTON MANSION

The last of the guests are dropping their valuables into Brenda's bulging velvet sack. The Chief Thief (his name is CHARLEY) pulls Brenda aside.

CHARLEY
Okay, good work. I'm gonna unlock that door over there, and you get away fast while I keep these suckers under control. See you at the meeting place in about thirty minutes.

Brenda nods, starts away with her loaded sack.

INT. & EXT. PADDINGTON MANSION

We go with Brenda out through the unlocked ballroom door, through the foyer and outside to the sidewalk, where she strides swiftly to a cab parked near the entrance, opens the back door and climbs in.

BRENDA
(to the driver)
Do you know where the Flash is located?

DRIVER
You mean the Brenda Starr paper? Sure thing.

INT. CAB (STARTING IN MOTION)

BRENDA
Who's she?

DRIVER
You kiddin'? Look.

He hands Brenda the newspaper he has been reading.

BRENDA
So early?

DRIVER
They put out an extra.

Brenda studies the front page of the Flash.

EXCLUSIVE EYEWITNESS STORY: BRENDA STARR
SEES KILLING, FINGERS SUSPECT.

DRIVER

That killer's cook is goosed.

BRENDA

"Fingers suspect." I get what you mean.

EXT. & INT. WATERFRONT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Marty Stutch escorts Belle, in her pirate costume, up a flight of wooden steps into the building. On the outside, the dilapidated structure appears to be a rundown warehouse. Once within the building and through a second door, one is suddenly in the plush, modern office of a fat, swarthy, cigar-smoking gentleman named TONY (THE PIG) MAZZARINI, seated behind a big desk. Lounging on the sofa is AN UGLY YOUNG ALBINO NAMED FREDERICK.

STUTCH

Here she is, Tony. This is the one.

Belle takes off her hat and grins widely at Mazzarini.

BELLE

Tony, for Christ's sake. Tony (The Pig)
Mazzarini. How the hell are you?

MAZZARINI

Belle, baby...

(he rises, starts around
the desk)

Good to see ya, honey. How's Charley?

BELLE

He's gonna kill me, that's how Charley is...

(they hug each other as
Stutch looks on, stunned)

Will you tell this dum-dum here I'm
not Brenda Starr?

Mazzarini releases her and looks at Stutch with contempt.

MAZZARINI

Ya done it again, Stutch, huh? Ya
done it again.

STUTCH

Jesus Christ, I coulda sworn--

MAZZARINI

You've blown it for the last time,
tootsie. You're finished. Look...

He takes a newspaper from his desk (The FLASH: EXTRA)
and thrusts it at Stutch, who looks down at it and pales.

STUTCH

Jesus...

BELLE

(nervously)

Tony, I gotta run...

MAZZARINI

(to Stutch)

Don't read that here, read it on
a plane to Rio. You got a passport?

STUTCH

Three of 'em. But Tony, I ain't--

MAZZARINI

No buts. Get moving.

STUTCH

(pleading)

I gotta talk to you...

MAZZARINI

(to Belle)

How the hell did he mistake you for
Brenda Starr?

BELLE

She and I were wearing the same costumes
at the Paddington ball.

Mazzarini's eyes narrow.

MAZZARINI

Wait a minute. Starr was at the
Paddington house tonight?

BELLE

My lousy luck, yeah.

MAZZARINI

(to the albino)

Get me that number in Megève in France,
and be quick.

FREDERICK
(rising)
Which one? We got seven.

MAZZARINI
The seventh. I think we're about
to get lucky.

As Frederick leaves the room:

BELLE
Hey Tony, I gotta run now and do some
explaining, okay?

MAZZARINI
(his mind elsewhere)
Yeah, yeah, okay honey. Sorry about this.
See ya around.

He gives her a wet kiss.

BELLE
Ciao, baby...
(looks at Stutch on the
way out)
Asshole.

STUTCH
Tony...

MAZZARINI
(angrily)
Didn't I tell you to beat it? You'll
never make it outta the country.

STUTCH
I ain't going, Tony.

MAZZARINI
You what?

STUTCH
I ain't going to no Brazil.

MAZZARINI
The hell you're not.

STUTCH
I'm stayin' here and I'm gonna waste
that newspaper broad. She's the only
witness that can put me in the chair...

MAZZARINI

(pointing a finger at him)

You listen to me, schmuck. I'm about to have important use for that redhead right now. She gets offed when I'm through with her, not before, and we're gonna do the offing, not you, because you're gonna be in Rio, where you're gonna keep your mouth shut about me, get it?

STUTCH

It's my life, Tony...

MAZZARINI

Don't you hear good? I just told you I need her.

STUTCH

And I need her dead...

Frederick enters abruptly.

FREDERICK

Megève on line three.

MAZZARINI

(indicating Stutch)

Give him a coupla grand for the road and get him the hell outta here.

FREDERICK

(taking Stutch by the arm)

Okay, Marty...

STUTCH

(over his shoulder)

You're lettin' me down bad, Tony. I figured you for better than this...

MAZZARINI

(on his way to the phone)

You were always dumb at figures, Stutch. You were dumb at everything.

He picks up the phone as Stutch is escorted out.

MAZZARINI

(to phone)

Hello, Harry? Can you hear me?...Then use your good ear, 'cause this is important...

INT. BACKROOM OF A SLEAZY BAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Charley, the Ballroom Burglar, still in costume, is having a furious time of it with the Belle of the Ball, Belle herself.

CHARLEY

Don't lie to me, you bitch. It was you.
I know it was you. Where have you
stashed it?

BELLE

(wearily)

I already told you, ask the broad who
worked the room with you, Brenda Starr.

CHARLEY

It was you, God damn it.

BELLE

Don't you know my hips better than that?

Charley seizes her, starts to shake her. The door bursts
open. TWO DETECTIVES enter.

DETECTIVE

Don't move. You're both under arrest.

BELLE

(disgusted)

For what? I wasn't even there.

2ND DETECTIVE

(sourly)

For wearing the two lousiest
costumes at the ball. What did you
think for? And we got three hundred
witnesses.

(to Charley)

Okay, where's the shiny stuff?

Belle throws her head back and breaks into peals of laughter.
Charley groans wearily and sinks into a chair.

CHARLEY

Oh for Chrissakes...

INT. MUGGS WALTERS' OFFICE - NIGHT

START CLOSE on the velvet sack, bursting with jewels, as
it lands with a thud on Muggs Walters' desk. Muggs looks
up to see Brenda the pirate standing before him.

MUGGS

What the hell is this?

Brenda thrusts a piece of paper at him. He takes it and
starts to read it.

MUGGS
(irritably)
Don't you know how to spell?

BRENDA
In a cab? In motion? In the dark?

MUGGS
(still reading)
Jewel robbery...sensational...terrific...
This'll be a big one for the late morning
edition.

He catches himself being enthusiastic and checks it, frowning.

MUGGS
What about the Jennifer Paddington
engagement announcement I sent you to
get?

BRENDA
I'm sorry, Mr. Walters. I must have
forgotten all about it.

MUGGS
What kind of reporter are you?

BRENDA
You should have sent Hank O'Hair. She
would have gotten it.

MUGGS
Don't get smart with me, young lady. You're
in enough trouble as it is.

BRENDA
Trouble?

MUGGS
The D.A. is definitely gonna need you as
a material witness when they catch up
with Marty Stutch and bring him to trial
for the Kochenko murder.

BRENDA
What about my front page pictures? Aren't
they enough to convict him?

MUGGS
No, they're gonna need you, in person, to
really nail him to the wall. Which means that
Tony (The Pig) Mazzarini is probably figuring
out, even as you and I talk here, how to remove

MUGGS

(cont.)

you from all worldly cares, if you know what I mean, and I think you do.

BRENDA

Yes I do, and for my own personal safety, I think the least you can do is send me out of the country for the duration, until the trial.

MUGGS

Out of the country? What country?

BRENDA

This one.

MUGGS

Where to?

BRENDA

Megève, in the French Alps.

MUGGS

(eyes narrowing)

Brenda Starr, what is it I should know that you're not telling me?

BRENDA

Please don't ask me, Mr. Walters, because you'd never forgive yourself if I answered you.

MUGGS

God damn it, and who's going to pay for this...this...vacation?

Brenda leans over, picks up the velvet sack, turns it upside down, pours a mountain of jewels on Muggs Walters' desk, and smiles.

BRENDA

The insurance companies?

Muggs looks at her, defeated.

MUGGS

Don't send me a postcard, okay?

Brenda heads for the door, triumphant.

BRENDA

Au revoir.

Muggs turns to MISS JENNINGS, a hardened veteran of the secretarial wars, who has been sitting in the background taking it all in. (Brenda is gone now).

MUGGS

Get me Arthur Paddington and monitor the call.

Miss Jennings goes to the extension, sits down, dials a number.

MISS JENNINGS

(to phone)

Mr. Paddington?...Mr. Horace Walters of the Flash is calling. One moment please.

Muggs picks up his phone (Miss Jennings listens, and shorthands the conversation).

MUGGS

Arthur, I'll make it fast. I promised you a total news blackout on your personal misfortune, and we've done just that. So when you read the late morning edition, I don't want you to get alarmed about one of our reporters being at your house tonight. She was there strictly for the society page...Of course I understand. And when I make a promise, I keep it. I won't even ask you how things are progressing... We're praying for you, Arthur.

He hangs up and rubs a hand over his face.

MUGGS

I'm such a terrible liar, Miss Jennings.

MISS JENNINGS

Technically, no, Mr. Walters. The fact that you sent Brenda there secretly hoping that she would discover something on her own, and do something about it, is not the same as breaking your promise.

MUGGS

But what about my lying to Brenda?

MISS JENNINGS

You've told me yourself, many times, that the way to get Brenda to do her very best is to make her think that she's putting one over on you. That's being a very wise editor, Mr. Walters.

MUGGS

Thank you, Miss Jennings. I don't know what I'd do without you.

MISS JENNINGS

You'd probably have to face the fact that you're not to be trusted.

INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Brenda, out of her pirate costume and into a negligee, is packing a suitcase in great haste, while fat cousin Abretha Breez, in pajamas and hair-curlers, talks alternately on the phone and to Brenda.

ABRETHA

(to phone)

Not tomorrow, tonight. She wants to leave tonight...Of course I'll hold on...

(to Brenda)

It's not like you, Brenda, taking a sudden vacation like this. Workaholics don't take vacations...

BRENDA

Aren't you always telling me that I need one? That I'm twenty-three years old without a man in my life? That it isn't natural?

ABRETHA

Since when do you listen to me?

BRENDA

Starting right now.

ABRETHA

Sounds fishy. You could have any man in the world if you weren't always waiting for that mystery man of your recurrent dreams to materialize and come into your life. When are you going to face the fact that there is no such person as Basil St. John?

BRENDA

What would you say if I told you I saw him tonight?

ABRETHA

Some people claim they saw a flying saucer.

BRENDA

(lightly)

I'm sorry, I can't stop hoping that someday my dream man will come true, and hold me in his arms forever.

ABRETHA

Just in case you run into him in the French Alps, ask him for me, why the black eye-patch and why the flowing black cape.

(to phone)

Hello, hello? Damn these airlines...

BRENDA

The trouble with you, Abretha, is that you have no romance in that big fat soul of yours.

ABRETHA

(stung)

And the trouble with you is that you use this fantasy figure as an excuse never to get involved with a real, live, flesh-and-blood man...

BRENDA

Pardon me...your couch is showing.

ABRETHA

I'm telling you the truth. It's why you're always on the run, always out to beat the competition. Brenda Starr, girl achiever, scared as hell to stand still and be a woman...

BRENDA

(disturbed)

You know there are times when I think you hate me, Abretha, and this is one of them.

ABRETHA

(grumbles)

It's not hate. Just jealousy.

(to phone)

Yes?...Oh good...Arrives Geneva twelve noon? Perfect. Make that in the no smoking section, please, and seat her next to a man, for heaven's sake--

BRENDA

Abretha!

ABRETHA
 (to phone)
 Thank you, ma'am, goodnight.
 (she hangs up)
 You've got exactly one hour.

BRENDA
 Darn, I can't get this suitcase closed.
 Would you sit on it please?

ABRETHA
 I'll do no such thing.

BRENDA
 Why not?

ABRETHA
 The last one I sat on they poured maple
 syrup on it and ate it for breakfast.

EXT. JET IN MOTION - NIGHT

We see a Swissair 747, high up in the night sky, flying eastward.

INT. JET

In the semi-darkened plane, some of the passengers are curled up sleeping, some are reading, some are having a late late nightcap. Brenda, dressed chicly for travel, is sitting in an aisle seat with her eyes closed. Her overhead reading light is on, and a book rests in her lap. A GRAY-HAIRED, BESPECTACLED, ELDERLY GENTLEMAN SEATED NEXT TO HER AT THE WINDOW IS FAST ASLEEP. Directly across the aisle from Brenda, A RED-NECKED MAN WHO HAS HAD ABOUT EIGHT DRINKS TOO MANY IS MAKING THE SLURRING SOUNDS OF INEBRIATION. An attractive STEWARDESS comes up the darkened aisle with a Virgin Mary in her hand and stops beside the napping Brenda.

STEWARDESS
 (softly)
 Miss Starr?...

(FLASH CUT - BIG CLOSEUP OF THE "SLEEPING" ELDERLY MAN NEXT TO BRENDA - His right eye opens furtively, and quickly closes)

STEWARDESS
 Miss Starr?...

Brenda opens her eyes and sees the stewardess.

STEWARDESS
Here we are.

BRENDA
(taking the glass)
Oh thank you.

STEWARDESS
I wonder if I could see you in the
galley for a moment?

BRENDA
Certainly.

As Brenda places her drink on the arm-rest, the inebricated
red-necked man grabs at the stewardess saying:

MAN
Hey, wha' abou' me, c'mon...?

STEWARDESS
(firmly but politely)
I'm sorry, you've had all you're
going to have tonight.

MAN
Ridiculous...

As Brenda eases herself to her feet and the red-necked man
grabs at the stewardess again, we FLASH CUT TO THE "SLEEPING"
ELDERLY MAN WHO, BARELY OPENING HIS EYES FOR AN INSTANT, MOVES
HIS RIGHT HAND QUICKLY, DROPS SOMETHING INTO BRENDA'S DRINK
AND GOES RIGHT BACK TO "SLEEP." Brenda starts up the aisle
after the stewardess. Immediately, the drunken passenger
across the aisle leans to his left, stretches his arm out
and filches Brenda's Virgin Mary. He is pouring it down his throat
in one long, endless gulp even as the "sleeping" elderly
gentleman is opening one eye and registering total dismay.

IN THE GALLEY

The stewardess is waiting there as Brenda arrives.

STEWARDESS
Sorry to bother you, Miss Starr...

BRENDA
(smiling)
No bother. What's up?

STEWARDESS

This'll probably sound silly, but the Captain thought I ought to tell you anyway. Our agent at the boarding gate sent a message by company radio that a male passenger on this flight waited at the desk until you were given your seat assignment, and then came forward and specifically requested a seat as close to you as possible.

BRENDA

Oh?

STEWARDESS

There was just enough hint of your being followed, or shadowed or something, for our agent to have second thoughts about it, and contact the Captain.

BRENDA

(calmly)

I'm flattered at all the attention, but I'm sure it's really nothing.

STEWARDESS

(relieved)

Of course. Probably just one of your fans or something. You may have to give him an autograph.

BRENDA

(casually)

By the way, what was his name again?

STEWARDESS

No name listed on the manifest. He must have paid cash for his ticket.

BRENDA

One of those rich ones, huh?

STEWARDESS

He's four rows behind you in the window seat, 29 B.

BRENDA

Do me a favor. Don't say anything about this conversation, all right?

STEWARDESS

Oh, you bet. It's forgotten.

BRENDA

And do thank the Captain for me.

STEWARDESS

I certainly will.

Brenda leaves the galley, walks up the aisle towards her seat, eyes narrowing, expression set with the look of Miss Super Sleuth on the scent. (In the corner of the frame, we will notice the drunken, red-necked man slumped over in his seat as though dead to the world). When Brenda arrives at her seat, she does not sit down, instead, looks towards the fourth row behind her. Through the darkness (in a P.O.V. shot), she SEES a rugged-looking, handsome man of about 30 in the window seat with his face averted as he peers intently out of the window. (THE AISLE SEAT BESIDE HIM IS APPARENTLY UNOCCUPIED). Brenda stands watching the man, and then suddenly he turns away from the window and catches her in the act of staring at him with obvious interest, and his attractive face brightens at the implication. Brenda quickly averts her gaze, and to cover her momentary confusion she starts to move again, towards the washrooms in the rear. As she passes the row in which the man is seated, she allows herself only an imperceptible sideward glance, her head pointed carefully straight ahead. The man smiles at her hopefully, and undaunted by the lack of response, turns his head to watch her walking away from him towards the rear. She opens the door of an unoccupied washroom and disappears inside. We are CLOSE ON the rugged-looking young man as he turns to gaze straight ahead again, smiling slightly, lost in pleasant fantasies. He is awakened from his reverie by the sudden appearance of another man's body in the frame, someone apparently returning to the unoccupied seat. The handsome man starts to scramble to his feet saying:

MAN

Oh, I'm sorry, I was just borrowing your window for a moment to look out and--

The other man's hand is easing him back down.

OTHER MAN'S VOICE

Stay where you are, fellah. I sleep better with my feet in the aisle anyway.

MAN

Are you sure?

OTHER MAN'S VOICE

Sure I'm sure. Sit tight.

MAN

Well thank you.

The newcomer eases his body down into the aisle seat (and fully into frame), and we see now who it is (who is was who had originally been seated in 29 B at the window) -- FREDERICK, the ugly albino henchman of Tony (The Pig) Mazzarini. He closes his eyes and hunkers down for some sleep. Next to him, wide awake and ever hopeful, the new occupant of 29 B looks back over his shoulder to see if that beautiful girl who apparently has eyes for him has reappeared.

And there she is, emerging from the row of washrooms into the opposite aisle, and walking forward. The rugged-looking guy follows her with his gaze, and is suddenly rewarded with a brief but powerful come-hither look, and then Brenda keeps moving forward in the plane, and disappears from his view.

We go with her through the plane. At the curtain separating Economy Class from First Class, she walks past two dozing stewardesses into the First Class section and goes UP THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE to:

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE OF JET

Brenda goes to the large, rectangular, communal table at the far end of the lounge and sits down. The STEWARD comes over to her.

STEWARD

Can I get you something?

BRENDA

Oh dear, I left my Virgin Mary downstairs.

STEWARD

We'll make you a new one.

He goes back to the bar, and almost immediately, the handsome rugged-looking young man appears at the head of the staircase and enters the lounge.

MAN

(to the steward, looking
towards Brenda)

Any chance of a double martini
on the rocks?

STEWARD

I don't see why not.

MAN

Good.

He heads for the rectangular table, sits down close to Brenda, who doesn't look at him. He smiles to himself, waits patiently, glances at her once, looks away, waits until the steward has set their drinks down, then looks at her again. He raises his glass.

MAN

Nothing like a pickup at thirty seven thousand feet, right?

BRENDA

(looks at him coolly)

You don't have to try to be clever.

MAN

(shrugs)

Well, I didn't want to say something dumb, like "hello there."

BRENDA

How about a simple "thank you"?

MAN

Really? What have you done for me lately?

BRENDA

I came up here, to give you a chance to sit closer to me than four rows away.

MAN

Much as I appreciate small favors, I sure hope we're going to do better than that.

BRENDA

Why? What is this itch you seem to have for proximity?

MAN

Hey, am I coming on confusing or something? Most women don't ask me such obvious questions.

BRENDA

Maybe most women aren't all that interested in finding out why they're being followed.

MAN

I didn't know I was following. I thought I was being led.

BRENDA

Look, why don't we stop all this? Just tell me, what are you up to?

MAN

(grins)

No good, lady. No good. And I'm assuming the same goes for you.

BRENDA

Just who are you?

MAN

At last we're getting somewhere. I'm Larry Nickels, like in nickels and dimes. And whose little girl are you?

BRENDA

He said, with a straight face.

LARRY

Actually, my right profile is slightly twisted.

BRENDA

What do you do, Mr. Nickels?

LARRY

Me? Oh, I look after some business interests in Sun Valley, and the rest of the time I fly back and forth in planes like this one waiting for lovely young mysteries like you to come along and make life worth living.

BRENDA

Do you have any identification on you?

LARRY

(stares at her in
amazement)

Are you serious?

BRENDA

Always.

LARRY

Well let's see, I do have a strawberry mark on the right side of my lower back, which I would be happy to show you right now if I weren't so damned shy.

BRENDA

Mr. Nickels, which would you rather do, play games, or put everything on the table?

LARRY

(looking down at the table)
It's big enough. Why don't we try both?

BRENDA

Are you always this amusing, or do you sometimes get a laugh?

LARRY

If we stay close together long enough, maybe we'll find out. Where are you headed for-- I mean after we land in Geneva?

BRENDA

Interesting. You don't know where I'm going yet I know where you're going.

LARRY

Bet you don't. Bet you dinner tomorrow night you don't.

BRENDA

(flatly)

You're going to the Hotel Mont d'Arbois in Megève.

LARRY

(making a quick decision)

How the devil did you know that?

BRENDA

Simple. I'm going there, so naturally you're going there.

LARRY

(gazes at her)

That's the nicest bet I ever lost.

BRENDA

Suppose I don't care to collect?

LARRY

You wouldn't welsh on a winning bet, would you?

BRENDA

Anytime. Except when I'm still trying to find out what you're up to.

LARRY

Don't worry, you'll find out, if you give me the opportunity.

BRENDA

I've given you plenty of opportunities. You didn't take advantage of one.

LARRY

Up here? Take advantage in a public lounge? You shock me, lady. What is this world coming to?

BRENDA

Did anyone ever tell you that at thirty seven thousand feet you can be awfully vulgar?

LARRY

Sure, they say you can, and I've tried, but I just can't seem to make it.

BRENDA

(rises)

A little sleep can't possibly be worse than this. Good night, Mr. Nickels.

LARRY

Hey, wait a minute. If I'm taking you to dinner tomorrow, I should know your name, shouldn't I?

BRENDA

Would I waste my time on you if I thought you didn't?

She walks away from him to the spiral staircase, and he looks after her with a slightly puzzled, and more than slightly intrigued smile on his face.

EXT. SKY SHOT OF 747 NEAR GENEVA AIRPORT - DAY

The big Swissair jet is descending on its final approach.

INT. CABIN OF PLANE

The passengers are alert and ready for the landing -- but not Brenda, who is asleep in her seat (beside the wide-awake, gray-haired, elderly gentleman). Moving up the aisle checking passengers, the stewardess pauses beside Brenda, taps her gently on the shoulder. Brenda awakes with a start and fumbles to fasten her seat belt. The stewardess turns to the red-necked, beefy man across the aisle to wake him up. First a gentle tap, then a harder one, then a rough shaking. But the man doesn't wake up. Instead, he falls out of his seat onto his back in the aisle, very dead. Brenda and the stewardess and the nearby passengers stare down in horror.

STEWARDESS

Heart attack...poor thing...

The white-haired gentleman doesn't even bother to turn his head and look.

EXT. AIRPORT

The 747 comes down onto the tarmac for a perfect landing and goes out of the shot.

EXT. GENEVA AIRPORT TERMINAL BLDG. - DAY

We SEE Larry Nickels hurrying into a taxi and driving away rather speedily. Then we SEE Frederick the albino emerge from the terminal, glance about, and spot a slim, dark-haired man (named HARRY) waiting for him beside a gray Citroën. The albino shakes hands with Harry, and then the two men get in the car and drive away. Now we SEE a group of Swissair passengers crowding into a MINIBUS whose sign advertises its destination: MEGÈVE. Among the group pushing into the bus is a semi-sleepwalking Brenda. One of the last to board is the gray-haired, bespectacled, elderly gentleman of the plane. He is carrying his lone suitcase in his left hand. The door closes and the bus pulls away.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE OF MEGÈVE - DAY

The minibus is seen making its way on the snowy road from Geneva to the village of Megève.

INT. MINIBUS IN MOTION - MASTER SCENE

The little vehicle is crowded. Some of the passengers are standing. Brenda is seated in an aisle seat, fast asleep, her head drooping forward. Seated directly behind her on the aisle is a fat Swiss woman with a gurgling, playful, two-year-old male child in her lap. Standing near the child and behind Brenda is the elderly white-haired gentleman. His expression is bland, impassive, but his eyes are fixed on the back of Brenda's exposed, inviting neck. CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE on the man's right hand. We HEAR A CLICK and SEE A BRIGHT, SHINY KNIFE BLADE materialize out of the handle concealed in his hand. THE BUS IS SLOWING DOWN FOR AN INTERMEDIATE STOP. The elderly gentleman's eyes shift tensely from side to side. No one is looking at him. He moves closer to Brenda's exposed neck. The little male child looks up, gurgles and giggles and smiles up at him and slaps at his arm playfully. The bus is stopping. The elderly man raises the knife. Sunlight hits the blade. It sparkles. The child squeals with delight, reaches out and grabs the shiny object. Suddenly HE LETS OUT A SCREAM OF PAIN and continues to scream as he holds up his BLOODY HAND and his fat mother SHRIEKS and all eyes in the bus turn to see what the commotion is about, while the elderly gentleman with his knife quickly slipped into his pocket quietly eases himself towards the front, saying "Excuse me please", and gets off the bus, and Brenda, of course, sleeps through it all, and is still asleep as the bus continues on.

EXT. BUS STOP AT SIDE OF ROAD

The elderly white-haired gentleman stands before a ramshackle wooden shelter watching the bus drive off. Then he goes inside the deserted shelter with his lone suitcase in hand. CAMERA stays on the outside, shooting towards the entrance. We HEAR a car go by off-screen in one direction. Then we HEAR another car from the other direction. Then the door of the ramshackle shelter opens, and out comes the man and his suitcase. But he is no longer white-haired, elderly or bespectacled. He is just plain Marty Stutch, and looking very frustrated.

INT. LOBBY OF HOTEL MONT D'ARBOIS - DAY

Larry is at the far end of the front desk, in heated conversation with the French, English-speaking RESERVATIONS CLERK.

CLERK

But, Monsieur Nickels, the Mont D'Arbois cannot perform miracles...

LARRY

I don't need one. I need a room.

CLERK

Without a reservation, at the height of the season? It is out of the question.

LARRY

You don't know how urgent this is.

CLERK

Even if it were a matter of life and death, monsieur...

LARRY

(taking a wad of bills
from his pocket)
It's worse than that. It's a matter
of love and death.

He slips a few hundred-dollar bills across the counter.

CLERK

(without even glancing at
the money)
Love...That is an entirely different
matter...

He turns quickly, takes a room key from its cubbyhole, signals to a nearby bellboy.

CLERK

Cent trente huit pour monsieur.

LARRY

Oh, and would you call the Hotel
Mont Blanc, please, and cancel my
reservation there?

He walks away, following the bellboy to the elevator, leaving the clerk to stare after him in astonishment.

CAMERA NOW PANS to the entrance to pick up Brenda arriving. She sleepwalks across the lobby to the front desk, stands there waiting, closes her eyes. The Reservations Clerk comes over to her.

CLERK

Bonjour, madam.

Brenda stands there, asleep on her feet. The clerk reaches across the desk and shakes her gently. She wakes up.

BRENDA
Where am I?

CLERK
The Hotel Mont D'Arbois.

BRENDA
Good.

CLERK
Thank you.

INT. BRENDA'S HOTEL BEDROOM - LATER IN AFTERNOON

Brenda, in pajamas, is in bed, in a deep sleep. The TELEPHONE RINGS -- several times before she awakens, reaches out and takes the receiver into bed with her.

BRENDA
(to phone)
I said I didn't want to be disturbed...

MAN'S VOICE
(through phone)
We told the operator it was an emergency, because it is...

BRENDA
Who is this?

MAN'S VOICE
We knew you were coming, and we knew why.

BRENDA
Okay, so you're brilliant. Who are you?

MAN'S VOICE
A friend of Jennifer Paddington's. Would you like to see her?

BRENDA
If you're so smart, why do you ask such dumb questions?

MAN'S VOICE
Be at the base of the intermediate slope in a half hour.

BRENDA
How will I know you?

MAN'S VOICE

Just be there...and wait.

The connection is broken. Brenda hangs up, gets out of bed and stretches languorously. The DOOR BUZZER SOUNDS. She opens the door. A MAID enters with a large vase filled with red roses, with a note attached.

MAID

The desk held these until they
knew you were awake, Miss Starr.

BRENDA

(opening the note)
Who says I'm awake?

INSERT OF NOTE:

"Dear Brenda Starr: (for that was her name, ah hah!): I have a table for two in the dining room at nine o'clock. I promise to be good -- up to a point. Larry"

Brenda smiles to herself as she looks at the roses.

EXT. INTERMEDIATE SLOPE - LATE AFTERNOON

Skiing reasonably well, Brenda is making her way towards the base of the slope, glancing about as she goes, looking for signs of the anonymous caller. All kinds of mysterious-seeming figures glide towards her -- and continue by. One of them, wearing large goggles, and obviously ill-suited to skis, stops and looks after Brenda as she passes. He raises the goggles, and we SEE that it is Marty Stutch. He hurries over to the nearby chairlift, climbs into a chair and starts up the slope.

We pick up Brenda nearing the base of the slope, still glancing about in vain. She comes to a SMALL, NARROW TREE STUMP sticking up out of the snow, a little less than waist high. She comes to a stop and sits down on the stump for a few moments' rest. Then she gets to her feet again on her skis and stands before the tree stump looking about. THE SLOPE IS BEHIND HER, LEADING DOWN TOWARDS HER. THE TREE STUMP IS DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF HER. Shooting past the stump and past Brenda, we now SEE, high up on the slope, what appears to be a toboggan coming down the slope with a man seated on it steering it. It is still far away, and it is gathering speed, and it is coming in Brenda's general direction from behind her back.

CLOSE TRAVELING SHOT - THE TOBOGGAN

Marty Stutch is the man on the toboggan, and his expression leave little doubt that he has unpleasant intentions.

MOVING P.O.V. SHOT FROM TOBOGGAN

The object of Stutch's intentions is Brenda, standing before the invisible (to Stutch) tree stump, her back to CAMERA, which is hurtling down towards her at a murderous speed.

MED. SHOT - BRENDA

Looking off innocently, oblivious to the hurtling toboggan that we SEE coming down at her from behind her.

FLASH VERY CLOSE SHOT - MARTY STUTCH

Bracing himself for the kill.

FLASH CLOSEUP - BRENDA

Seeing something off to her left and reacting.

FLASH - BRENDA'S P.O.V.

A HANDSOME, DARK-HAIRED MAN WITH A BLACK EYE-PATCH AND A FLOWING BLACK CAPE APPEARS TO BE STANDING IN THE SNOW WITH HIS ARMS OUTSTRETCHED TO BRENDA, BECKONING TO HER.

MED. SHOT - BRENDA

She reacts with joy, starts to move towards the beckoning figure.

FLASH CLOSEUP - MARTY STUTCH

Reacting with horror at what he SEES.

FLASH SHOT - STUTCH'S SWIFTLY MOVING P.O.V.

Brenda is moving away, suddenly revealing the tree stump too late to be avoided.

BRENDA

Turning into CAMERA, joyful expression suddenly changing as she HEARS, off-screen, STUTCH'S SCREAM, the SOUND OF THE TOBOGGAN SMASHING INTO THE STUMP.

BRENDA'S P.O.V.

We SEE the toboggan, cleanly split lengthwise down the middle into TWO EQUAL HALVES, coming to a stop on the far side of the tree stump. Ten yards beyond that, we SEE Marty Stutch's LEFT LEG protruding, shoe first, up out of the snow. About eight feet to the right, we SEE his RIGHT LEG poking up out of the snow. The picture is clearly one of Marty Stutch, split up the middle. The impression is on the screen only for a moment. Then we CUT TO:

BRENDA

Horried at the realization that she has just escaped death. She turns now towards the man who has just saved her life by being there and beckoning to her, and her face registers bewilderment.

FLASH SHOT - BRENDA'S P.O.V.

There is no sign of the man in the black eye-patch and the flowing black cape. It is as though he had never been there (though he could have skied over the ridge). Back to:

BRENDA

Looking off in another direction, startled.

BRENDA'S P.O.V.

Coming towards Brenda in the near distance from another direction at an ominously threatening speed is a LARGE SNOWMOBILE driven by a slim man wearing a ski mask and large black goggles over his face (It is Harry).

OBJECTIVE SHOT

Panicking, Brenda turns and starts away on her skis, desperate to escape the onrushing snowmobile. She manages to get to the ridge and fly off into the air towards the slope below her before the snowmobile speeds by and out of the shot, in pursuit of her, leaving us with a view of Marty Stutch's split personality sticking up out of the snow. Suddenly,

something startling happens. Near the CAMERA, and not far from the split toboggan, the snowbank starts to stir, and then we SEE Marty Stutch coming up out of the snow, slightly dazed, brushing the snow off himself. BELOW THE WAIST, HE HAS NOTHING ON BUT LONG WOOLEN UNDERWEAR. HE GOES OVER TO HIS LEFT TROUSER LEG AND SHOE, AND THEN TO HIS RIGHT TROUSER LEG AND SHOE, RETRIEVES THEM, AND LIMPS AWAY FROM CAMERA.

TRAVELING SHOTS - BRENDA ON SKIS - HARRY ON THE SNOWMOBILE

A CHASE SEQUENCE in which Brenda, zooming down the slopes and sailing through the air and making perfect landings, performs like a Winter Olympics champion, while Harry, on the snowmobile, calmly and swiftly pursues her, just waiting for his opportunity. It comes when Brenda takes one difficult leap too many and lands sprawling in a snowbank. The snowmobile comes to a quick stop beside her. Harry jumps out, picks Brenda up in his arms, sets her down in the passenger seat of the oversized snowmobile, gets behind the steerer and starts away with her.

ON THE SNOWMOBILE - TRAVELING SHOT

As Harry drives Brenda towards the village of Megève:

BRENDA

Are you the voice on the phone?

HARRY

Who did you think I was?

BRENDA

I don't know. To me you look like the man in the gray flannel face.

HARRY

I told you to wait for me. Why the hard time?

BRENDA

I was frightened. Someone just tried to kill me.

HARRY

(unimpressed)

Is that right?

BRENDA
You don't believe me.

HARRY
Who would want you dead, except...

His voice trails off.

BRENDA
(oblivious, lost in thought)
If it hadn't been for Basil St. John...

HARRY
(glancing at her)
Who?

BRENDA
Basil -- never mind. You wouldn't understand.

HARRY
Probably not.

BRENDA
Where are you taking me?

HARRY
To see Jennifer Paddington.

BRENDA
Instead of kidnapping people, did you
ever consider looking for a job?

HARRY
Listen, you think this isn't hard work?

BRENDA
I don't know why I should trust you.

HARRY
You shouldn't.

BRENDA
Well I don't.

HARRY
Good.

The snowmobile has now entered Megève proper.

OBJECTIVE SHOTS - EXT. MEGÈVE

We SEE the snowmobile on its way through the streets of the
colorful, elegant little village. At a corner, the snowmobile

comes to a stop to let cross traffic through.

EXT. STORE WINDOW OF MEN'S BOUTIQUE & GIFT SHOP

SHOOTING THROUGH THE WINDOW FROM OUTSIDE, we SEE Larry Nickels within the boutique just as his attention is attracted by something he sees outside.

LARRY'S P.O.V. THROUGH STORE WINDOW

He SEES Brenda in the snowmobile as the vehicle starts into motion again and drives out of view.

INT. BOUTIQUE

Larry turns away from the window with a thoughtful expression on his face. A SALESMAN approaches him.

SALESMAN

May I help you, monsieur?

LARRY

Yes. I'm looking for something,
some way -- je ne sais quoi -- some
way to make a shall-we-say favorable
impression on a young lady I just met.
I'm taking her to dinner tonight.

SALESMAN

(smiles)

You have no idea how often that
happens in Megève, monsieur, particularly
après-ski. I have just the thing...
something that never fails...

LARRY

You do?

SALESMAN

Follow me if you will.

EXT. ALLEYWAY IN MEGÈVE

The snowmobile is entering the narrow, winding alley. It comes to a stop before the entrance to an ancient residential building. Harry assists Brenda out of the vehicle and leads her into the building.

INT. BUILDING

Harry leads Brenda up two flights of stairs to a closed door. He raps on the door three times. It is opened by a man in a ski suit whose face, like Harry's, is covered by a ski mask and goggles (It is Frederick). Harry ushers Brenda inside, tarries at the doorway for a moment to say a few words to Frederick, who is closing the door.

HARRY

(sotto voce)

Someone is after her. Start guessing who.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF FLAT

It is a cozy, warmly decorated room in what is obviously a charming apartment. Harry and Frederick start across the room towards a closed door, as Brenda glances about appraisingly.

BRENDA

If the rent's not too high, I'll take it...

HARRY

Wait here.

The two men go into the next room. Brenda browses for awhile, picking up objects, examining them, looking out of the window into the street below. Presently the door opens and both men come back in, bringing with them a slim, flaxen-haired young woman dressed in jeans, boots and a turtle neck sweater. Much of her face is obscured by a blindfold. Harry eases her down onto the sofa saying:

HARRY

You've got a visitor, Jennifer.
Brenda Starr.

JENNIFER

Really? Brenda Starr, the reporter on the Flash?

BRENDA

How are you, Miss Paddington?

JENNIFER

Please call me Jenny. Gosh, I didn't think the newspapers knew about this.

BRENDA

They don't, and don't you worry, I won't print a word until you're free.

JENNIFER

Free...God...Will I ever be?

BRENDA

Are you all right, Jenny?

JENNIFER

I suppose so. Yes. I'm fine.

HARRY

(to Brenda)

Look, we didn't bring you here for chit chat. Her father won't come across with the ransom until he's sure she's okay, and double sure we'll release her. You're going to have to do the convincing.

BRENDA

Why me?

HARRY

Let's put it this way: you got a better reputation than us.

BRENDA

Okay, what do I do?

HARRY

There's the phone...
(hands her a slip
of paper)

And here's Arthur Paddington's private number. You've got an International Credit Card number, right?

BRENDA

Yes.

HARRY

Use it. And if they ask you where you're calling from, say your hotel: 467-300.

Brenda picks up the phone, dials and waits. Then, to the operator:

BRENDA

I'd like to make an International Credit Card call to the United States, to Chicago. My credit card number is 1-991-455-634J as in "Japan". The number I'm calling is area code 312, 615-9891... Yes, I'll wait...

(she looks at Jenny)

Jenny, when did all this happen?

JENNIFER

About a week ago, in Paris, in the shopping arcade of the Ritz. Dylan went to the men's room, and when he came back, if he ever did, I was gone.

BRENDA

Do you think he knows you've been kidnapped?

JENNIFER

Not unless someone told him. He probably thinks I got mad at him and ran out on him. We quarrel a lot.

BRENDA

About what?

JENNIFER

Money, mostly. He's got none, you know. He's a poet.

BRENDA

So I've heard.

JENNIFER

Daddy and Mother disapprove of him immensely. Daddy said he'd cut off my allowance for good if I marry Dylan. They think he wants me just for my money. They should see us in bed.

HARRY

Cut the conversation, huh?

BRENDA

(to phone)

Yes, I'm ready...Thank you...

HARRY

No funny business now.

INT. PADDINGTON MANSION - CHICAGO - MORNING

In the breakfast room, Arthur and Martha Paddington, in pajamas and dressing gowns, are at the breakfast table glumly picking at their bacon and eggs, while the two FBI men, seated in the background, are reading the morning paper. The PHONE RINGS. Paddington grabs it. The FBI men go on the alert, and the recording equipment starts rolling.

PADDINGTON

Hello?...Yes?...This is Arthur Paddington...
 What?...Who?...Brenda Starr? I sure do know who
 you are, and you better be calling to apologize for
 that damn-fool story you wrote making my wife and me
 look like idiots for allowing our guests to be
 burglarized last night...What are you talking about?...
 What?...You are?...She is?...Oh my God...
 (to his wife)

Martha, she's in Megève with Jenny and the kid-
 nappers, and Jenny is all right, she's fine...

Martha lets out a shriek.

PADDINGTON

Miss Starr?...Hello, Miss Starr, can I speak
 to my daughter? Can you put her on?

INT. MEGEVE APARTMENT

BRENDA

(to the men)

He wants to talk to her.

HARRY

(sharply)

Forget it. You do the talking.

He hands Brenda another piece of paper on which he has been scribbling instructions.

JENNIFER

Say hello to Mother and Daddy for me.

BRENDA

(to phone)

They said no, Mr. Paddington, but Jenny says
 hello...Don't ask me. I'm just on a vacation...
 No, absolutely not. Muggs Walters doesn't know
 a thing about all this, and I'm counting on you
 not to say a word about it to anyone, because
 when it's all happily over, it's going to be
my story, Mr. Paddington...

HARRY

Hey, will you get on with it, for Christ's sake?

BRENDA

Here are your instructions, Mr. Paddington, and please bear in mind that none of this is my idea...

(glancing at the slip
of paper)

At twelve noon tomorrow Swiss time, the manager of the main branch of Credit Suisse in Geneva is to hand over a suitcase containing three million dollars in unmarked Swiss francs. It says here they must be old bills, not new ones...That's right...Wait a minute, I'll ask...

(to the men)

Hand over the money to whom?

HARRY

To someone Paddington can trust...you.

BRENDA

Me?

HARRY

Tell him.

BRENDA

(to phone)

To someone you can trust, Mr. Paddington... me...Thank you. That's very kind of you...Just a second, I'll ask...

(to the men)

Who does Jenny get released to, and when?

HARRY

To you, the moment the money is in our hands. Get him to agree, and hang up.

BRENDA

(to phone)

Mr. Paddington? It's all arranged, I get Jenny when I turn over the money. Is it a deal? Do you agree?...

(to men)

He says yes...

JENNIFER

Hooray...

BRENDA

(to phone)

No no, I'm delighted to be able to help...God bless you too, Mr. Paddington...

HARRY

Hang up.

BRENDA

(to phone)

There's nothing to worry about...

HARRY

Hang up, God damn it.

BRENDA

(to phone)

Goodbye, Mr. Paddington.

She hangs up.

HARRY

We'll arrange for a car and driver to be in front of the hotel at ten o'clock in the morning to take you to the bank in Geneva, and bring you back here with the money.

BRENDA

If it's all right with you, I'll do my own arranging for a car and driver...

HARRY

Suit yourself. Let's go.

BRENDA

Wait a minute. Where do we make the transfer? Jenny for the suitcase...

HARRY

At the end of the bucket-lift. That's the top of Mont d'Arbois, two thousand meters up. You should be able to make it up there between two and three in the afternoon.

BRENDA

Why up there?

HARRY

Because I say so. And if you bring anyone with you, Jenny goes flying off the mountain top.

BRENDA

Did anyone ever tell you you're a sweet man?

HARRY

(taking her by the arm)
Let's go.

BRENDA

'Bye, Jenny. See you tomorrow.

JENNIFER

You're wonderful, Miss Starr.

Brenda is led out. Frederick moves over to the window and looks down into the alley. Finally he turns, speaks briskly to the girl on the sofa.

FREDERICK

All right. They're gone. Let's get out of here before the owners show up.

AS HE AND THE GIRL CONTINUE TALKING NOW, he is removing his goggles and ski-mask. "Jennifer" is rising from the sofa, undoing her blindfold, whipping off a flaxen-haired wig, pulling bobby pins from her pinned-up tresses, and quickly becoming a dark-eyed, slightly ravaged looking girl in her mid-twenties with raven hair down to her shoulders.

GIRL

Well, I wasn't too bad, for an amateur.

FREDERICK

(with contempt)
You do better on your back.

GIRL

She sounded so really...nice.
I don't like what we're into...

FREDERICK

You like working the bars of Europe better?

GIRL

No one told me you were planning to...do something to her...

FREDERICK

Right now she's useful. After that she's in the way. Bottom line: she goes.

GIRL

I still don't think--

FREDERICK

Stop trying to think. You're outta practise.

GIRL

(flaring)

Look, don't talk to me like that, you freak.

The albino moves at her swiftly and slaps her face with a stinging blow. She stares at him, white-faced.

GIRL

(quietly, as though challenged)

All right...

INT. BRENDA'S HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT &
INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT IN CHICAGO - DAY

Brenda, in charming pre-dinner undress, is seated on her bed in her hotel room, talking on the telephone to cousin Abretha, who is dressed in a sloppy bathrobe, eating an ice cream bar on a stick. WE INTERCUT BETWEEN THE TWO:

BRENDA

I can't tell you everything, Abretha, this is long distance...

ABRETHA

Then what did you call me for?

BRENDA

To tell you I saw him again today.

ABRETHA

Saw who?

BRENDA

Basil St. John. He saved my life.

ABRETHA

Never mind that. Did he kiss you?

BRENDA

Do you have food in your mouth again?

ABRETHA

You didn't answer me. Did he kiss you?

BRENDA

No.

ABRETHA

Did he speak to you? Did he touch you?

BRENDA

No.

ABRETHA

Oh, Brenda, you're hopeless.

BRENDA

I'm going to hang up now.

ABRETHA

Don't go away mad.

BRENDA

I'm not mad. I have a dinner date.

ABRETHA

With Basil St. John?

BRENDA

No, with Larry Nickels.

ABRETHA

Who is Larry Nickels?

BRENDA

I don't know, but I'm going to try to find out.

ABRETHA

Brenda, you're worse than hopeless.
Oh dear, I think I smell my TV dinner burning.

BRENDA
TV dinner? Didn't you just finish lunch?

ABRETHA
It's my afternoon snack. Do you mind?

BRENDA
G'bye, Abretha.

ABRETHA
'Bye, Brenda. Say hello to Basil for me
if he should float by.

Brenda hangs up....a little sharply.

INT. DINING ROOM AND BAR OF HOTEL - NIGHT

The dining room is crowded with handsome men and lovely women. But all the lovely women in the room are not enough to prevent the phenomenon of male heads suddenly swiveling or glancing up, eyes riveted to the entrance. Then we see the object of their sudden attention: Brenda has arrived, and is looking about for Larry Nickels. She is wearing spike-heeled gold shoes, glittering sheer stockings and a gold lame disco dress slit up the thigh to here. It is when her gaze goes to the bar that a stunned look comes to her eyes.

BRENDA
(to herself)
Basil...

FLASH P.O.V. OF THE BAR

One of the men seated at the bar with his back to Brenda does appear to have the black elastic of an eye-patch across the back of his head, and he does appear to be wearing a black cape. His eyes go to the mirror behind the bar. He SEES Brenda's reflection, and starts to turn.

CLOSEUP OF BRENDA

Reacting with even greater excitement.

BRENDA
Basil...

TWO SHOT - BRENDA AND THE MAN

They are going towards each other, and he does have a black eye-patch and he does have a black cape, and he does look handsome, and Brenda goes into his arms crying:

BRENDA
Is it really you?

MAN
Of course it's me.

And it really is. It's Larry Nickels.

BRENDA
(drawing back)
Oh...

LARRY
(eyeing her)
You look fantastic.

BRENDA
(small)
So do you.

LARRY
Thank you.

BRENDA
How did you know?

LARRY
(not comprehending)
A salesman in the village told
me this getup would be a big
hit, but I never dreamt...

BRENDA
(eyes narrowing)
Were you up on the slopes this afternoon?

LARRY
No. Were you?

BRENDA
(too much excitement)
I feel faint...

LARRY

I'm starved too.

BRENDA

Let's sit down, shall we, Basil?

LARRY

Larry. Larry Nickels. The guy on the plane? Who's taking you to dinner?

The MAITRE D' has come up to them.

MAITRE D'

This way please, Mr. Nickels.

He leads them to a table and seats them. On the way, they draw scattered applause...Brenda for the gold lamé, Larry for being lucky enough to be with her. Before sitting down, Larry removes the cloak and hands it to the maitre d'.

LARRY

Could you send this up to one thirty eight please?

MAITRE D'

Certainly.

Then Larry takes off the eye-patch and hands that over.

LARRY

This too...
(to Brenda as he sits down)
I want to see all of you, not half.

MAITRE D'

Aperitif?

LARRY

(to Brenda)
Champagne?...Melted snow?...

BRENDA

Champagne would be perfect.

LARRY

Dom Perignon please.

MAITRE D'

Very well.

He goes off. Larry gazes at Brenda, slightly overwhelmed by her beauty. She is eyeing him with friendly distrust.

LARRY

Frankly, I didn't think you'd show tonight.

BRENDA

How could I say no to those beautiful roses?

LARRY

In case you're wondering, it was the front desk that told me who you are.

BRENDA

There goes my brief career as a woman of mystery.

LARRY

I'm much impressed. You've done some terrific things, Brenda.

BRENDA

If I'm all that good, how come I seem not to know as much about you as you know about me?

LARRY

My life, compared to yours, is dull. What's there to know?

BRENDA

Let's talk about your quote business interests unquote in Sun Valley.

LARRY

You and I can do better than that, can't we?

BRENDA

How about your mission to Megève then, your reason for being here?

LARRY

Nothing dramatic, I'm afraid, like knocking out the guns at Navarone, or something. Merely looking over some European ski resorts to see what they have to offer that we don't have in Sun Valley...

BRENDA
With what purpose?

LARRY
To buy them, perhaps.

BRENDA
You buy ski resorts?

LARRY
Yeah.

BRENDA
How many do you own?

LARRY
You know I'm not sure? I think...
forty seven.

Brenda stares at him in amazement.

LARRY
It's all right. I don't believe
it myself.

BRENDA
You going to buy this one?

LARRY
I don't think it's for sale.

BRENDA
Then what are you doing here?

LARRY
You said this was where you were
going, so...

He shrugs.

BRENDA
(comprehending)
Then I didn't win the bet.

LARRY
(shakes his head)
I lie a lot.

Brenda makes a face.

LARRY
Disappointed in me?

BRENDA
Well, it's not very flattering. Here
I was thinking I was your mission.

LARRY
But you are.

BRENDA
I thought you were following me.

LARRY
I am, and I will, to the ends of the
earth...maybe even further.

A captain arrives with the champagne, pops the cork and
pours. Larry raises his glass.

LARRY
To the woman of mystery.

BRENDA
Who's that?

LARRY
You.

BRENDA
I'll drink to that.

They click glasses, and sip champagne. Brenda's gaze
shifts away from Larry, focuses on someone across the
room. Her expression darkens. Larry watches her growing
more serious.

LARRY
What is it?

BRENDA
Nothing.

LARRY
I tell you the whole story of my
life and you say 'nothing'?

BRENDA
A man over there has been watching us a
little too intently.

LARRY

After all, we're such a smashing couple.

He turns, follows Brenda's gaze, SEES (IN A P.O.V. SHOT)
Frederick the albino, seated alone at a small table.
When Larry looks at him, Frederick quickly looks away.

LARRY

(to Brenda)

He's just one of the passengers who
was on the plane to Geneva with us.
In fact he let me stay in his window seat,
so he can't be all bad.

BRENDA

(with interest)

You mean...you changed seats with him?

LARRY

Actually I swiped his seat to look out
of the window when he went to the men's
room. That's when you came along and started
giving me the eye, you wicked girl you.

BRENDA

Then you weren't the man in 29 B?

LARRY

No. My seat was on the aisle. Why?

BRENDA

(looking across at
the albino)

Someday, not now, but someday, remind me
that I owe you an apology.

LARRY

Hm, I like that, and I intend to collect.

He observes Brenda still staring across the room with a
serious expression.

LARRY

All right, woman of mystery. What's
the big secret?

BRENDA

(looks at him)

I smuggle cocaine to the jet set in
loosely packed snowballs.

LARRY
(seriously)

You're worried about something, aren't you. You're in some kind of trouble, maybe even danger...

BRENDA
(alert)

Why do you say that?

LARRY

Because you're suspicious of strangers, nice ones like me...Because you imagine you're being followed when you're just being admired...Because you get disturbed by a man staring at you across a room when you happen to look stunning and no doubt have been stared at since the age of five. Why shouldn't I think something is wrong?

(Brenda stares at him, says nothing)

Does it have anything to do with the man in the ski mask...?

(Brenda stays silent)

The one who drove you through the village this afternoon in that snowmobile?

BRENDA
(in a level voice)

With forty seven ski resorts to worry about, don't you think you should stay out of my business?

LARRY
(easily)

If I weren't so crazy about you, I'd punch you right in the mouth.

BRENDA
(meeting his gaze)

Before you get violent, let's order dinner. I'm famished.

Larry signals to the captain, who approaches, as Brenda's searching gaze goes across the room again to Frederick.

FREDERICK - MED. CLOSE

The albino is getting up from the table. Now he starts out of the dining room. On the way out, he pauses for a moment alongside another table, murmurs a word or two without looking down, then continues on out of the frame. CAMERA HOLDS on this other table. Seated at it we now see the slightly ravaged

raven-haired girl who had impersonated Jennifer Paddington. With her is Harry, who is sipping wine and watching the girl. She is staring sullenly at her wine glass.

HARRY

What the hell's wrong with you?

GIRL

Nothing.

HARRY

That's not the way I heard it.

GIRL

If you know, what do you ask for?

HARRY

Why don't we dance?

GIRL

I'm not in the mood.

HARRY

Force yourself.

GIRL

(bitterly)

I'm sick and tired of doing what I don't want to do...all my life...Sick of it...

Harry studies her with cold, narrowing eyes, then looks off.

BRENDA AND LARRY - FROM HARRY'S P.O.V.

They are getting up from the table, moving onto the dance floor, as the captain leaves with their order.

BRENDA AND LARRY ON THE DANCE FLOOR

The music is soft and slow at the dinner hour. Larry holds Brenda close as he murmurs to her:

LARRY

I find myself rapidly arriving at an unnaturally favorable impression of this resort. Are you sure you don't work for the Office of Tourism?

BRENDA

I never moonlight.

LARRY

The French Alps have something we just don't have in Sun Valley, and I'd like very much to bring it back with me.

BRENDA

What's that?

LARRY

You.

BRENDA

(after a moment)

I'm very seasonal...

LARRY

I wouldn't care.

BRENDA

Icy in winter. Haven't you noticed?

LARRY

As long as I'm with you when you melt.

Brenda says nothing, but her expression shows her secret pleasure.

HARRY AND THE GIRL - AT THEIR TABLE

Harry is staring off at the dance floor. The girl is watching Harry's expression, and becoming increasingly unhappy.

HARRY

Look at them. Can't you just smell mattress talk by midnight? He's gonna know everything...if he doesn't already...

GIRL

I don't want to hear about it.

HARRY

He's gonna have to be removed too, when the girl goes...

GIRL

I told you I don't want to hear about it.

HARRY

(looks at her)

I'm worried about you, Laura. So is Fritzie. He says you've got no stomach. He says you're losing heart. I told him he was crazy. Was I wrong?

LAURA

(distracted)

He is crazy. You're both crazy. When I came into this, only money was involved, not murder...

HARRY

(with a chilling smile)

Don't say murder, say fatal accident.

Abruptly, Laura pushes her chair back and gets to her feet. Just as quickly, Harry reaches out, grabs her wrist, twists it and forces her back down into her chair.

HARRY

Nobody leaves this ballgame without permission.

He stares at her coldly. She meets his gaze, but her lips tremble.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Brenda and Larry are walking slowly towards her room.

LARRY

Not even one teeny-weeny nightcap?

BRENDA

I really do have to get to sleep. My biological clock is still seven hours behind.

LARRY

My biology never felt better. Sure you won't reconsider?

BRENDA

Positive.

LARRY

You know, I promised to be good up to a point. This could be the point.

BRENDA

It's been such a lovely evening, Larry. Let's not spoil it.

LARRY
Hardly what I had in mind.

They come to a stop at Brenda's door. She offers her hand.

BRENDA
Goodnight, and thank you for cheating
on that bet.

He takes her hand.

LARRY
Anytime.

He draws her close and kisses her on the forehead.

LARRY
Let's spend tomorrow on the slopes
and break a few legs together, all
right?

BRENDA
(hesitating)
Tomorrow? I...uh...

LARRY
(eagerly)
Is it a date?

BRENDA
I'm sorry. I can't.

LARRY
Why not?

BRENDA
I...I just...can't...

LARRY
Hey, I'm not going to let you get away
from me that easily. Whatever you do
tomorrow, I'm going to do it with you,
including the ladies' sauna.

BRENDA
(after a moment)
All right...skiing it is.

LARRY
Good. I'll be waiting for you at the
chairlift at nine o'clock. How's that?

BRENDA
Better make it ten.

LARRY
Ten on the button. Terrific.

He starts away. Brenda looks after him with concern. He turns for a moment, calls back:

LARRY
Don't forget to wind your biological clock.

Brenda unlocks her door, goes inside and shuts the door. CAMERA PANS SWIFTLY to the other end of the corridor. An exit door is slightly ajar. The door opens wider now and out steps a furtive Marty Stutch. He has been watching and waiting. He glances up and down the corridor, SEES that Larry has disappeared, goes quickly to Brenda's door and puts his ear to it.

INT. BRENDA'S BEDROOM AND BATHROOM

Brenda is peeling off her gold lamé disco dress, tossing it on a chair on her way to the bathroom. In the bathroom, she turns on the shower, begins to remove her underthings.

IN THE CORRIDOR

Marty Stutch tries the door. Naturally it is locked. He takes a plastic card from his pocket, works on the latch, quietly releases it. He opens the door slightly, HEARS THE SOUND OF THE SHOWER from within the room, quickly goes into the room and closes the door softly.

INT. BRENDA'S BEDROOM AND BATHROOM - (MASTER SCENE)

Brenda is in the shower now. We can see her in the glass shower-stall through the open bathroom doorway. Stutch takes out his knife, clicks the blade open, starts towards the bathroom. INTERCUT BRENDA IN THE SHOWER...STUTCH MOVING SLOWLY FORWARD. CAMERA is on Stutch as the PHONE RINGS. Startled, he stops, looks at the phone, then towards the shower. The PHONE KEEPS RINGING. Obviously Brenda doesn't hear it. Uncertain, Stutch waits either for Brenda to answer the phone, or for the phone to stop ringing. Finally, it stops.

Through the bathroom doorway, we hear the shower go off, then we see Brenda step out of the stall with a large towel

and start to towel herself dry.

Stutch pulls back out of Brenda's line of sight, waits with the knife in his hand. Then he quickly ducks back into a dark alcove as Brenda comes out of the bathroom wrapped in the towel, goes to a closet, takes out a robe, tosses her towel aside and slips into the robe.

Stutch watches from his hiding place as Brenda turns off the overhead lights, pulls back the bedcovers, takes off the robe, tosses it to the foot of the bed and gets into bed beneath the covers. (THE ONLY LIGHT IN THE ROOM IS STREAMING THROUGH THE WINDOWS).

Brenda turns over to go to sleep.

Stutch stealthily moves out of his hiding place, knife in hand.

Brenda moves about in bed, making herself more comfortable.

Stutch pauses, until Brenda finally settles down. He starts forward again.

Suddenly the PHONE RINGS again.

Marty Stutch freezes. Brenda sits up in bed, takes the phone from its cradle on the night table.

BREND
(to phone)

Yes?

LARRY'S VOICE
(through phone)

I called you a couple of minutes ago.
Where were you?

BREND
I had a late date.

LARRY'S VOICE
Why aren't you asleep?

BREND
The phone keeps ringing.

LARRY
Goodnight again.

BREND
Goodnight.

LARRY'S VOICE

Ten o'clock in the morning

BRENDA

If you let me go to sleep.

LARRY'S VOICE

Go.

They both hang up. Brenda puts the phone back, slides down under the covers, pulls the blankets over her head and rolls over.

Marty Stutch is sweating. He takes out a handkerchief and wipes his face. He puts the handkerchief away, gets the knife poised in his right hand again, licks his dry lips, starts stealthily towards the bed in the semi-dark room.

CLOSE ON BRENDA, we can hear her measured breathing. She has fallen asleep.

CLOSE ON STUTCH, we see him moving tensely to the bed. He stands over the bed, looking down at his intended victim, weighing the correct target area for his strike. Slowly he raises his right arm high over his head. The knife blade glints at the top of its arc. And just as the knife starts down, a hand comes out of nowhere and grabs Stutch's wrist and stops the motion, and another hand clamps itself over Stutch's mouth, and a third hand drives another knife with a savage thrust into Stutch's back between his shoulder blades, and without so much as a whimper, Marty Stutch is dead, and slumping into the arms of his killers, Frederick the albino and Harry. They take the body by its arms and legs and quietly carry it out of the room, closing the door noiselessly behind them, while Brenda sleeps on, totally unaware of what has almost happened to her.

EXT. SKI LIFT - HOTEL MONT D'ARBOIS - DAY

CAMERA STARTS on an outdoor clock showing 11:48, then PANS DOWN to the area where the chairlift begins its upward journey. As a throng of enthusiastic skiers climbs into the chairs that pass by, the crowd thins enough for us to see a frustrated Larry Nickels seated on a bench at ground level, still waiting for Brenda, his skis and poles stacked beside him. He glances at the clock, and his expression grows grimmer.

EXT. CLOCK ON BUILDING - CITY OF GENEVA - DAY

The clock's hands are at 11:49. CAMERA PANS DOWN to:

A BLACK MERCEDES BENZ SEDAN - EXT. CREDIT SUISSE BANK

The car is pulling up to the curb near the entrance to the bank.

INT. MERCEDES

There is a middle-aged DRIVER behind the wheel in chauffeur's uniform. In the back seat sits Brenda. She glances at her wristwatch, looks out of the window at the entrance to the bank, then settles back in her seat, waiting.

EXT. APPROACH TO BUCKET-LIFT - HOTEL MONT D'ARBOIS - DAY

CAMERA IS MOVING with Harry, Frederick and Laura, their faces partially hidden by huge sun-goggles, as they walk on their skis towards the bucket-lift cableway that carries skiers to the loftiest peaks. The pathway that the threesome is taking leads past the chairlift area where Larry is seated waiting for Brenda. Laura, straggling behind her two companions, glances off and reacts as she SEES:

LARRY SEATED ON THE BENCH - FROM LAURA'S P.O.V.

CAMERA ZOOMS IN on Larry.

LAURA AND THE TWO MEN

Laura's face takes on a shrewd, determined expression. She deliberately slows down, calls to the two men:

LAURA
Go on ahead, I'll catch up. These
damned skis are loose.

HARRY
(turns, annoyed)
Make it fast, will you?

Laura skis away from the men.

LARRY ON THE BENCH

He straightens up, glances idly at Laura as she comes into the shot. She sits down next to him, leans over and begins

to fumble with her ski boots. She is extremely nervous and apprehensive, speaks rapidly, with great urgency.

LAURA
Don't look at me, just listen.
I'm being watched...

LARRY
(startled)
Who are you?

LAURA
Your girl friend is in terrible danger--

LARRY
Brenda?

LAURA
Tony Mazzarini wants her dead and buried--

LARRY
Who?

LAURA
--As soon as she turns over the
ransom. You too...

LARRY
What ransom? Where is she? I've been
calling her room...

LAURA
Geneva--

LARRY
Geneva?...

LAURA
In a couple of minutes, twelve noon,
she's gonna pick up the suitcase with
the three million dollars from the
manager of the bank--

LARRY
Which bank?

LAURA
Credit Suisse -- Oh Christ, they're
coming...

(she jumps to her feet,
frightened)
Don't let her turn over that suitcase.
They won't touch her until they've got
their hands on the dough...

FLASH CUT - HARRY AND FREDERICK - LAURA'S P.O.V.

In the near distance, the two men are SEEN skiing towards the bench.

LARRY AND LAURA

LAURA
(starts away)
Don't follow me...

LARRY
(rising)
How can I reach you?

LAURA
(calling back)
Tell her the real Jenny gets into
Acapulco tomorrow...

LARRY
Wait a minute...Who?...Acapulco?

But Laura has hurried away from him, her attention on the approaching men. Larry glances quickly at the clock.

FLASH CUT - THE CLOCK

It is now 11:55.

LARRY

He turns and hurries towards the main building of the hotel, leaving his skis and poles behind in his haste.

HARRY AND FREDERICK ON THE SLOPE

They come to a stop, look off in Larry's direction past the approaching Laura, their faces grim.

LAURA
(nervously)
Some jerk tried to pick me up...

She goes past them quickly towards the bucket lift. The two men continue to stare off in Larry's direction.

HARRY
That was him all right...

FREDERICK
(darkly)
If she spilled her guts...

HARRY
(looks at him)
And if she didn't, she will.

Frederick meets his eyes for a long moment. Then they turn and go after Laura, who is stacking her skis and poles inside the open, waiting bucket.

HOTEL SWITCHBOARD - DAY

Two women OPERATORS are working the switchboard, speaking in French. One of them looks up at Larry, standing over her, and addresses him in English:

OPERATOR
Credit Suisse in Geneva, m'sieur?

LARRY
(urgently)
That's right.

OPERATOR
Which branch, m'sieur?

LARRY
I don't know which branch. I guess the main branch. Get me the main branch.

OPERATOR
Do you have the number, m'sieur?

LARRY
No, I don't. Will you get it for me please?

OPERATOR
(answers another call)
L'Hotel Mont D'Arbois. Bonjour.

LARRY
Will you please hurry...

EXT. BUCKET-LIFT CABLEWAY TO MONT D'ARBOIS - DAY

We see the enclosed, egg-shaped bucket containing Laura,

Harry and Frederick moving out beyond the ridge to start its ascending trip across the deep valley below, on its way to the high peaks beyond. All other buckets in sight are empty.

INT. BUCKET

Harry and Frederick are seated next to each other facing Laura. Their goggles are above their foreheads. Their expressions are cold, impassive. Laura watches them, licking her lips. Her face twitches slightly. She seems unnerved by the total silence of the two men as they stare at her. She glances out at the yawning, perilous chasm far below (which we SEE in a FLASH CUT from her P.O.V.), then she looks at the two men again.

LAURA

(forces a smile)

I haven't been this high since I got stoned on hash in Majorca last summer...

(there is no response)

Speaking of trips, I don't know what I'm doing on this one. You don't need me up there. My part is over.

HARRY

(nods)

That's right.

Then there is uncomfortable silence again.

LAURA

I mean, what are we gonna do up there for three hours?

HARRY

(quietly)

Fritz and I are going to have a leisurely lunch, and then we're going to lie in the sun and look at all the pretty girls and dream of beautiful things to come, expensive things...

(turns his head)

Isn't that right, Fritz?

FREDERICK

Exactly.

Laura looks at them. Something in their manner is beginning to frighten her, and she speaks now with a nervous little laugh:

LAURA
You act like I'm not with you...

HARRY
(matter-of-factly)
True.

LAURA
(coming apart)
You know, I don't think I get
this joke...

HARRY
(with utmost calm)
It's no joke, Laura. Your part is
over.

He motions to Frederick. The albino rises, grasps the door handle, and there is a sudden rush of wind as the door swings open. Eyes wide, Laura instinctively draws back.

LAURA
What the hell are you doing?

HARRY
How much did you just tell him back
there?

LAURA
(frightened)
Who?...What are you talking about?

HARRY
How much did you tell him, Laura?

LAURA
(panicking)
Harry...make him close the door. I'm
too--

FREDERICK
Talk, God damn it!

LAURA
(with terror)
What are you going to do?

HARRY
Nothing...if you tell us...

LAURA
(wails)
You promise?

HARRY
(ominously)
Laura?

LAURA
(in a frightened jumble
of words)
Nothing...just Acapulco...Jenny in
Acapulco tomorrow...

HARRY
You told him that?

LAURA
But that's all...I swear to God...
Harry, that's all...

FREDERICK
What about the QE2?

LAURA
Not a word...I swear to you...on
my life...

HARRY
On your life? What a coincidence.

He rises to his feet. Laura looks at the open door,
then at the faces of the two men.

LAURA
(wildly)
Harry, listen to me...Brenda Starr
will go there with the money...You'll
take her with one hand...Harry, listen
to me...

LOW ANGLE - THE CABLEWAY - SHOOTING UP FROM GROUND LEVEL

The bucket is a moving speck against the sky, a thousand feet
above the CAMERA, which is surrounded by rocks and snow. We
HEAR Laura's DISTANT SCREAM, then SEE her hurtling from the
bucket followed by her skis and poles. Her scream grows
louder and her flailing figure gets larger as she falls
DIRECTLY TOWARDS CAMERA. Then her scream becomes ear-splitting

and her body fills the screen just before she smashes past the CAMERA and the terrible SOUND OF IMPACT cuts off the scream. Now there is only silence in the valley, and the egg-shaped bucket, high overhead, moving on.

EXT. CREDIT SUISSE BANK BUILDING - DAY - (GENEVA)

WE HEAR CHURCH BELLS CHIMING THE HOUR OF NOON.

Brenda gets out of the parked Mercedes, crosses to the bank entrance and goes inside.

INT. BANK - LONG SHOT - (TABLEAU)

Brenda enters the crowded bank, sees a uniformed guard, goes up to him, exchanges a few words. He nods, leads her to a closed door and presses a button. Presently a BUZZER SOUNDS, the guard opens the door, gestures to Brenda to enter, which she does. The guard closes the door, then takes up a vigil a few feet away.

TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD AREA IN BANK

Several woman OPERATORS are handling calls in French and German. CAMERA MOVES IN on one of them.

OPERATOR

Credit Suisse...Oui, Madame...Ne
quittez pas...

(she plugs in a cable,
rings, then takes another
call)

Credit Suisse...Oui, Monsieur?...
Repetez s'il vous plait...

(IN ACCENTED ENGLISH)

And this Brenda Starr is a customer?

...Ah no, Monsieur, I am very sorry.

We cannot page a client on the premises.

We do not have that capability here...

The manager? He is Monsieur Henri
Pelissand. Do you wish to speak to
his secretary?...Very well, Monsieur,
but you will have to wait. All of her
lines are occupied right now because
she has been holding all calls...

(taken aback)

Yes I do understand, Monsieur, but there
is nothing I can do...

INT. MAIN FLOOR OF BANK

The guard is still waiting beside the closed door. Now the door opens and Brenda comes out, carrying a slim TAN LEATHER SUITCASE. Escorted by the guard, she walks quickly to the bank entrance and goes out.

EXT. BANK BUILDING

As Brenda emerges from the bank, the driver of the Mercedes sees her, quickly gets out of the car and opens the door for her. Brenda gets in the back, the driver gets behind the wheel, and the car pulls away. As the Mercedes goes out of the shot, we see the guard in the entrance to the bank watching the car drive off. Suddenly another man appears beside him, pushes him aside and runs out to the sidewalk. It is obviously the BANK MANAGER. He glances about frantically, looks at the guard, who gestures in the direction taken by the Mercedes, speaking to him in French. The bank manager goes to the curb, looks off, shrugs, and goes back inside the bank.

INT. MERCEDES IN MOTION - GENEVA

Brenda takes the slim suitcase, which is more like an over-sized attache case, and places it in her lap. She takes a key from her shoulder bag, unlocks the suitcase, opens the lid and gazes down at the contents. (FLASH INSERT OF THE OPEN SUITCASE, BULGING WITH STACKS OF SWISS FRANCS).

BRENDA
(softly)

Wow!

DRIVER
(to rear view mirror)
Pardon?

BRENDA
Nothing.

She closes and locks the suitcase, returns the key to her bag, and settles back for the ride to Megève.

INT. LOBBY OF HOTEL MONT D'ARBOIS - DAY

Larry Nickels, frustrated and impatient, is in conversation with an unruffled, unhurried ASSISTANT CONCIERGE behind the desk.

LARRY

Don't tell me about tomorrow morning,
I want to go right now.

ASSISTANT

But, Mr. Nickels, what am I to do?
There is no driver available...

LARRY

Then I'll go without a driver. I'll
drive myself.

ASSISTANT

You told me you do not know the roads...

LARRY

A road is a road. I'll learn. How fast
can you get me a car...any car?

ASSISTANT

Thirty minutes perhaps?

LARRY

Ten.

ASSISTANT

Why don't you wait in front of the hotel,
Mr. Nickels? I will do my best.

LARRY

Do better.

He turns away from the desk and heads for the entrance.
The assistant concierge looks after him with an expression of
relief, then picks up the telephone.

EXT. HOTEL MONT D'ARBOIS - DAY

As Larry emerges from the front entrance, guests and
hotel employees are hurrying towards a four-man ALPINE
RESCUE TEAM carrying a stretcher on which lies the very
still figure of a young woman in a very familiar ski suit.
An AMBULANCE SIREN is HEARD, and then the ambulance is SEEN
entering the driveway and pulling over to the spot where
the rescue team has set down the stretcher. Larry walks
over to the small crowd that has gathered, pushes his way
through and looks down:

THE STRETCHER - FROM LARRY'S P.O.V.

The lifeless body of Laura is clearly visible, just before the
white-coated ambulance attendant leaning over her draws a
blanket over her face.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

Turning into the CAMERA, with a horrified look on his face. Over the shot, we HEAR the VOICES of TWO AMERICAN GUESTS:

WOMAN'S VOICE

They think she fell out of the bucket lift...

MAN'S VOICE

And this morning, they found a man's body at the bottom of the bobsled run...

WOMAN'S VOICE

I told you it was dangerous around here, didn't I?

LARRY

(grimly, to himself)
Very.

MAN'S VOICE

You think it's any safer in Miami Beach?

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD IN FRENCH ALPS - DAY

The black Mercedes is approaching the CAMERA. As it comes closer, CAMERA PANS with the car and HOLDS on a SIGN: "MEGEVE 42 KM."

INT. MERCEDES IN MOTION

Brenda is gazing straight ahead, the suitcase on the seat beside her.

BRENDA'S P.O.V.

Looking past the driver and through the windshield, Brenda SEES only the empty road ahead. Then suddenly, after her car rounds a curve, she SEES, in the distance, on the right shoulder of the road, what appears to be a STALLED CAR, a gray Citroën, with its front hood up and a MAN STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD WAVING HIS ARMS to flag down the Mercedes. As we get closer, we SEE that the man in the middle of the road is Harry, no longer in ski clothes. (Frederick, for the moment, is concealed behind the raised hood).

EXT. THE ROADSIDE (BECOMING A CLOSER ANGLE ON THE MERCEDES)

The Mercedes slows down and comes to a stop to the left of and to the rear of the Citroën. Brenda's driver lowers his window as the man (Harry) comes over and leans in (Brenda has never really seen his face before).

HARRY
(to the driver)
Parlez-vous Anglais?

DRIVER
Un peu.

BRENDA
I do.

HARRY
(to Brenda)
Oh, good...Hello there...
(his eyes flick to
the suitcase for an
instant)
I wonder if I could borrow your
driver for a moment to help me get
my car started.

BRENDA
If it won't take too long.

HARRY
You're very kind.

He opens the driver's door for him. The driver gets out, slams the door shut and accompanies Harry to the front of the apparently stalled Citroën. From BRENDA'S P.O.V. we SEE Harry and the driver lean over the engine, and for a split second we SEE Frederick peek out from behind the raised hood, then disappear again. BRENDA REACTS TO THIS. Now Harry straightens up, looks towards the Mercedes, then starts to stroll towards it, alone. Brenda quickly presses the button that electrically locks the doors of the Mercedes from the inside. Harry comes over to the rear door on Brenda's side, confidently pulls on the handle, and finds the door locked. Smiling, he raps on the window. Brenda lowers the window a few inches.

BRENDA
Yes?

HARRY
May I talk to you for a moment?

BRENDA
Go ahead. I hear you loud and clear.

HARRY
(with a quick glance
at the suitcase)
Do you mind opening the door?

BRENDA
Frankly, I'd rather not.

HARRY
Really? Why?

BRENDA
I must compliment you on your voice. It's
quite unforgettable.

HARRY
Thank you.

BRENDA
When did you stop pulling the
wool over your eyes?

HARRY
(easily)
Amusing, but a time waster. Open
the door, Brenda.

BRENDA
Unh uh.

HARRY
Your boyfriend get to you in Geneva?

BRENDA
One, he's not my boyfriend, and two,
he doesn't even know I was in Geneva.
He doesn't know anything about all this.

HARRY
Good. I like that. Now why don't you
lower the window a teeny bit more and
shove that suitcase through, and we'll
lead you right to Jenny.

BRENDA
That wasn't the arrangement.

HARRY

I'm trying to make things easier for you.

BRENDA

Let's do it the hard way, huh?

HARRY

You want Jenny back, don't you?

BRENDA

(pats the suitcase)

As badly as you want the three million.

Suddenly Harry turns and shouts.

HARRY

Fritz!

Brenda SEES the albino dart out from behind the raised hood of the other car and come running towards the Mercedes as Harry picks up a rock and tries to smash the partially opened window. In a flash, Brenda scrambles into the front seat behind the wheel, starts the car, shoves it into gear and lurches forward, with Frederick and Harry clinging to the hood. The Mercedes gathers speed. The two men fall clear. They get to their feet, run to the Citroën and get in, with Harry at the wheel. With a squeal of tires, the Citroën takes off after Brenda, leaving the bewildered driver standing alone in the center of the road.

CHASE SEQUENCE ON THE STEEP, WINDING MOUNTAIN ROAD

There are SHOTS INSIDE THE MERCEDES, INSIDE THE CITROËN... Brenda's tense, determined expression as she maneuvers the car at high speed on the perilous road, eyes flicking from the dangers ahead to the dangers behind her, as seen in her rear view mirror...Harry and Frederick, grim-faced as they try to overtake Brenda...THERE ARE HELICOPTER SHOTS FROM ABOVE showing both cars speeding along, and showing the death that lies on either side of the sheer, winding road...There are SHOTS FROM CAMERAS MOUNTED ON THE BUMPERS OF BOTH CARS, and POINT OF VIEW SHOTS THROUGH BOTH WINDSHIELDS...If slow-moving traffic gets in the way, both cars shoot out into the opposite lane, and escape death from on-coming traffic by inches...At times, the pursuers appear to be overtaking Brenda. But finally she jams her foot down to the floorboards, death or no death on either side, and starts to pull away from the Citroën. Rounding a curve, and completely concealed from the pursuing car for awhile, Brenda SEES A TURNOFF AHEAD. She swerves sharply to the right into the turnoff, veers into a concealing snowbank, comes to a sudden, noiseless stop, and in a few moments the Citroën zooms past the turnoff and keeps going. BRENDA STARTS THE ENGINE AGAIN, TRIES TO BACK THE MERCEDES OUT OF THE SNOWBANK, BUT THE REAR TIRES SKID. SHE APPEARS TO BE TRAPPED.

EXT. TRAVELING SHOT - THE CITROËN

Still speeding towards Megève.

INT. CITROËN IN MOTION

Harry and Frederick are peering ahead, eyes searching for a black Mercedes that is nowhere to be seen.

EXT. MERCEDES IN SNOWBANK

Brenda is wedging some broken branches under the rear tires to eliminate the skidding. Her car door is open.

INT. CITROËN IN MOTION

Harry and Frederick are grim with anger, peering ahead in vain.

FREDERICK
Can't this thing go faster?

Harry jams on the brakes. The car skids to a stop.

FREDERICK
What are you doing?

HARRY
(irritably)
You think I know?

He starts a U-turn.

EXT. ROAD

The Citroën completes the U-turn and speeds off in the direction it had come from.

EXT. MERCEDES IN SNOWBANK

Brenda jams the last branch into place beneath her rear tires, jumps into the car, starts the motor, shifts into reverse and revs the motor. The Mercedes struggles and strains, almost breaks free, then sinks back into its trap again.

INT. CITROËN IN MOTION

Harry and Frederick stare straight ahead in the speeding car.

MOVING POINT OF VIEW THROUGH WINDSHIELD

Nothing ahead but the icy, winding road.

BRIEF SHOT - REAR WHEELS OF THE MERCEDES

Slipping and struggling to gain purchase on the branches as Brenda guns the motor again.

EXT. ROAD NEAR BRENDA'S TURNOFF

The Citroën with Harry and Frederick in it is coming TOWARDS CAMERA. CAMERA PANS with the car as it goes past, HOLDS on the entrance to the turnoff. The Citroën speeds on in the direction of Geneva, goes out of the shot and the SOUND OF THE CAR RECEDES in the distance. Now we HEAR the SOUND OF THE MERCEDES BEHIND THE SNOWBANK making one last desperate attempt. We HEAR the car breaking free, then stopping, then lurching forward. And now the Mercedes, with Brenda behind the wheel, bursts out of the turnoff into view, turns sharply onto the road, and CAMERA PANS with the car as Brenda speeds off in the direction of Megève.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - TRAVELING SHOT - (A SHORT WHILE LATER)

A red Peugeot coupe is moving rapidly in the direction of Geneva on the road out of Megève.

INT. PEUGEOT IN MOTION

Larry is driving, his eyes searching the winding road ahead for a possible sign of Brenda.

INT. MERCEDES IN MOTION

Brenda is speeding towards Megève, eyes straight ahead.

BRIEF SHOT - LARRY IN PEUGEOT

Looking ahead.

LARRY'S MOVING P.O.V.

In the distance, a car is SEEN approaching. As it gets

closer, we SEE that it is the black Mercedes. Then it flashes by and is gone.

CLOSE SHOT - LARRY

He has seen the Mercedes go by in the opposite direction. We see, on his face, the time it takes for him to realize that it was Brenda at the wheel. He jams on the brakes, skids to a stop.

INT. MERCEDES IN MOTION (INTERCUT WITH P.O.V. SHOTS)

Brenda is still looking straight ahead. It is obvious from her manner that she has not noticed Larry in the car that passed by in the opposite direction. Her glance goes casually to her rear view mirror, and she reacts instantly as SHE SEES THE STRANGE (TO HER) CAR MAKING A FRANTIC U-TURN AND STARTING AFTER HER. Immediately she steps on the accelerator and the Mercedes shoots forward.

SECOND CHASE SEQUENCE

The location is new, but the danger is the same...sheer, precipitous drops, icy winding curves...Brenda in the Mercedes, driving like a veteran of the Grand Prix... Larry in the Peugeot, trying to overtake her and stay alive, blasting on his horn, trying to get her attention, shouting with frustration "It's me, God damn it, it's me!" But he never gets close enough for Brenda to see who her pursuer is...She hunches over the wheel and goes faster and faster...Suddenly, shockingly, the chase is all over. A slow-moving horse-drawn sleigh with two adults and four children in it appears out of nowhere directly in Brenda's path. She swerves sharply to avoid it and speeds towards a precipice.

SLOW MOTION EFFECT SHOT

The Mercedes hurtles off the precipice, soars through the air, turns over slowly, goes down, down, down, turning over again so that it is now wheels-down, continues its flight down, down, down, and lands in the enormous snowbank of a recent avalanche, disappearing beneath the snow.

EXT. TOP OF PRECIPICE

The red Peugeot comes to a frantic stop, a horrified Larry scrambles out, runs to the edge of the precipice and looks down.

LARRY'S POINT OF VIEW

The very hot black Mercedes is melting the snow so rapidly that the car comes into view before our very eyes, and in a few moments, Brenda is seen forcing the door open, squeezing out and standing on her feet, clutching the tan suitcase.

CLOSE SHOT - LARRY

Shaking his head in wonderment and relief. He cups his hands to his mouth, shouts:

LARRY

. You're a crazy, mixed up lady!

FULL SHOT - BRENDA

Furious, she puts the suitcase down, quickly packs a snowball and hurls it up at Larry. It falls only about a thousand feet short.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PEUGEOT IN MOTION APPROACHING MEGÈVE - A LITTLE LATER

Larry is driving. Brenda is seated beside him with the tan suitcase in her lap. She seems a little frazzled by the day's adventures.

LARRY

See what happens to you when you tell little white lies and stand me up on a skiing date?

BRENDA

I was in no position to tell you the truth.

LARRY

Well you are now, because like it or not, I know as much as you do about this dangerous mess you've gotten yourself into.

BRENDA

It's not a mess, it's a story, and nobody's got it but me.

LARRY

What good is a story that winds up
on the obituary page?

BRENDA

I like your optimism.

LARRY

Thank you. You sure you don't want
a doctor to look you over?

BRENDA

What for? It was like landing in a
featherbed. I'm just angry, I'm furious,
I'm sick and tired of being chased by
men.

LARRY

They love you for your money, that's all.
What you should do is go to the local
police and turn in the three million.

BRENDA

Not when I may need it to get Jennifer
back safe and sound.

LARRY

You mean we really are going to leave
all this beautiful ice and snow and
sudden death for the hot sun and cold
margaritas of Acapulco?

BRENDA

You don't have to go. It's my problem.

LARRY

Yeah? Who's going to keep you alive
while you're solving it?

BRENDA

You needn't worry about me.

LARRY

Besides, I hope to cure you of a very
bad habit in Mexico.

BRENDA

Really? Which one?

LARRY

(looks at her)

Being more interested in making the
front pages than in making me.

BRENDA

(looks away)

Keep your eyes on the road, will you please?
Right now I'm interested only in making
the plane.

EXT. AIR FRANCE CARAVELLE JET IN FLIGHT - DUSK

The dialogue is HEARD AS THOUGH WE WERE INSIDE THE PLANE,
AND CONTINUES WITHOUT A BREAK THROUGH THE ENTIRE TRAVEL
SEQUENCE AS THOUGH IT WERE ONE CONTINUOUS SCENE:

LARRY

Can I ask you a foolish question?

BRENDA

No, I will not marry you.

LARRY

That wasn't it. How can we be sure
that poor whoever-she-was wasn't the
Paddington girl?

BRENDA

Your description, and the fact that she
said the real Jenny will be in Acapulco
tomorrow. Obviously they fooled me with
a blonde wig and a blindfold covering
most of her face. That's why they never
let Arthur Paddington talk to her. He
would have known immediately that it wasn't
his daughter's voice. Which is why they
needed me...to convince him that they
were really holding Jenny.

LARRY

Well are they or aren't they?

BRENDA

That's what we hope to learn in Acapulco,
isn't it?

A moment of silence. Then:

LARRY

What do you mean you won't marry me?

EXT. AIR FRANCE CONCORDE JET TO MEXICO CITY - TWILIGHT

LARRY

Another foolish question...

BRENDA
How can I be in love with you?
I hardly know you.

LARRY
That wasn't it. How the devil are
we going to find Jenny? Acapulco is
slightly larger than a breadbox, you
know.

BRENDA
As long as I have the three million,
they'll find us.

LARRY
(gloomily)
Oh...wonderful...

BRENDA
We can even help them a little by
making ourselves very conspicuous.

LARRY
I'll buy you a monokini. That should
do it.

BRENDA
Good thinking.

LARRY
Good thinking hell. I just want to
die happy.

EXT. CONCORDE JET COMING IN FOR A LANDING IN MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

BRENDA
All this talk about dying isn't going
to sway me one bit. Jenny's father
trusted me, and I'm not going to let
him down now.

LARRY
Like you trusted those two men, and
that pathetic girl?

BRENDA
You can't expect me to judge character
when I can't see the faces.

LARRY
You can see mine. What do you think
of my character.

BRENDA

I can see your face, but I can't see
any character.

EXT. AERO MEXICO DC-10 SWOOPING DOWN OVER THE BRIGHT LIGHTS
OF ACAPULCO BAY AND COMING IN FOR A LANDING - NIGHT

LARRY

I hope you realize that we don't have
a damned thing to wear down here.

BRENDA

My credit cards are good. I assume
yours are too. Besides, who needs
clothes in Acapulco? You wear a suntan,
that's all.

LARRY

First sensible thing you've said on this
whole trip.

BRENDA

I knew you'd like it.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - ACAPULCO - NIGHT (MOVING SHOT)

CAMERA is MOVING AHEAD of two bellboys carrying luggage,
and behind them, Brenda and Larry, walking side by side,
Brenda carrying the tan suitcase. CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE
on Brenda and Larry as they talk in low tones, excluding
the bellboys:

LARRY

What a waste of money, taking two
suites instead of one.

BRENDA

Taste makes waste.

LARRY

Besides, you need protection. And
I'm very protective.

BRENDA

Has anyone ever told you you have
a one-track mind?

LARRY

You'll never derail it.

BRENDA
What makes you think I want to?

LARRY
I can see your face. Too much character.

BRENDA
How awful.

LARRY
I could change that, if you'd let me.
It's never too late.

BRENDA
It is now. I'm half asleep.

LARRY
What about the other half?

The bellboy has already opened Brenda's door, and she goes in. The other bellboy opens the door to the adjoining suite and Larry goes in.

ACAPULCO BAY - NIGHT - WIDE ANGLE SHOT

A beautiful panoramic view of the hotel-ringed bay, with lights reflected in the calm waters and the palm trees on the deserted beaches barely moving in the gentle breeze -- all of this AS SEEN FROM THE BALCONIES OF BRENDA AND LARRY, who are off-screen, but whose VOICES we HEAR:

LARRY'S VOICE
You've just put a lot of perfume on,
haven't you...

BRENDA'S VOICE
That's right...

LARRY'S VOICE
What did you do that for?

BRENDA'S VOICE
So you'd know I was here.

LARRY'S VOICE
Cruel and inhuman.

REVERSE ANGLE - LARRY AND BRENDA

We are shooting TOWARDS the balconies now. Larry, in

pajama trousers but no top, and Brenda, in a gauzy, revealing nightgown, are standing at the railings of their balconies, separated by a partition, looking off at the view but unable to see each other.

LARRY

You should be ashamed of yourself.

BRENDA

For what?

LARRY

For making me look at a view like this all by myself.

BRENDA

(smiles)

You could always send for one of the bellboys.

LARRY

You and I sure make a lousy Romeo and Juliet, do you know that?

BRENDA

Do you realize it's six o'clock in the morning in Megeve?

LARRY

You think that's something? It's tomorrow afternoon in Australia.

BRENDA

I better go to bed then. Goodnight, Larry.

LARRY

Maybe you won't hate yourself in the morning, but I will.

Brenda turns away from the railing and goes back inside. Larry stays at his rail, looking off.

INT. BRENDA'S HOTEL SUITE (MASTER SCENE)

Brenda enters from the balcony, turns off several lamps in the living room, on her face a bemused smile indicating that she is still thinking of Larry. The suite is dimly lit now. She starts for the bedroom. Suddenly, the DOOR BUZZER SOUNDS. She stops and turns, and the little smile does not leave her face. The DOOR BUZZER SOUNDS AGAIN. She goes up to the door, calls out:

BRENDA

Can't you quit while you're ahead?

The answer to that is a SOFT INSISTENT RAPPING on the door. Brenda thinks about it for a moment, then, first examining herself in the mirror, fluffing her hair and adjusting her shoulder straps, she unlocks the door and swings it open saying:

BRENDA

You are imposs--

Too late she tries to push the door shut. A coldly smiling TONY MAZZARINI already has a foot in the door and is pushing his way inside past Brenda saying:

MAZZARINI

Good evening...

He closes the door behind him and glances about warily, as Brenda controls her own inner tension.

BRENDA

I've been in Acapulco almost twenty minutes. What took you so long?

Without a word, Mazzarini goes quickly to the bedroom and the bathroom to look them over. Brenda reaches for the telephone and picks up the receiver, but quickly puts it down as Mazzarini comes back into the living room and approaches her. He seizes her chin rather roughly in his right hand.

MAZZARINI

A beautiful girl like you all alone?
Tch tch tch.

BRENDA

(batting his hand away)
I have you, Mr. Mazzarini. What more could I want?

MAZZARINI

Hey, she knows who I am.
(he bows)
I'm flattered.

BRENDA

(with mock praise)
Who could forget that face and that voice, answering all those questions at all those Senate investigations...?

MAZZARINI

Don't leave out the hands.

BRENDA

You gave new meaning to the words
"I don't remember."

MAZZARINI

Say, you're not such a bad chick
after all...everybody tellin' me
what a rough time you're gonna give
me in Chicago. Mind if I sit down?

BRENDA

Yes, I do.

(Mazzarini sits down on
the sofa anyway)

I'm very tired, and about to go to
sleep, and I know what you want and
the answer to that is, there's nothing
to talk about, just bring Jennifer
Paddington up here and you've got it.
Okay?

MAZZARINI

(playing it straight)
Jennifer Paddington...Jennifer Paddington
...I don't believe I know the lady.

BRENDA

You should ask someone for an introduction
sometime. She's worth three million
dollars, cash on the barrel, and I've
brought it all to Acapulco with me...every...
single...Swiss...franc of it.

Mazzarini's face begins to sweat. His eyes glitter with greed.

MAZZARINI

Ever since I was a kid, I always wondered
what three million bucks in cold hard
cash looked like in one of them foreign
currencies...

BRENDA

Beautiful.

Mazzarini unbuttons his linen jacket, revealing a holster
with a revolver in it.

MAZZARINI

Think you could bring yourself to
let me take a little peek at it?

BRENDA
(staring at the gun)
When?

MAZZARINI
Now.

BRENDA
You mean...now?

MAZZARINI
(darkly)
I mean right now.

BRENDA
(shakes her head)
Impossible. It's not here.

MAZZARINI
You're lying. Go get it.

BRENDA
Why don't you and I tear this nice
little suite apart...for nothing?

Mazzarini's scowl grows darker. He takes the gun from
the holster.

MAZZARINI
Do you have any idea how disappointed
I'm gettin' with you?

BRENDA
Oh indeed I do, Mr. Mazzarini. If only
you had let me know you were coming, I
never would have had the money locked
away downstairs in the hotel vault...
which doesn't open until morning...

(Mazzarini starts to
his feet menacingly)
And of course if anything should
happen to me, nobody could get their
hands on that money...

(Mazzarini comes to a stop,
stares at her with angry
frustration)

So you know what, Mr. Mazzarini? I
think maybe you better get yourself an
introduction to Jennifer Paddington by
tomorrow at the latest, before I lose all
that money at the roulette tables or
something.

Mazzarini continues to stare at her grimly. Then slowly he puts the gun back in its holster, buttons his jacket and starts for the door. Brenda opens it, and holds it open for him. He pauses in the doorway and points a warning finger at her.

MAZZARINI

Know what rhymes with Brenda Starr?

(Brenda shakes her head)

She thought she was so God damned smart...until she went too far.

BRENDA

(nods cheerfully)

It rhymes.

Mazzarini walks out, seething. Brenda closes the door, locks it carefully, snaps off the remaining lamp in the living room, and goes to the bedroom. She goes over to the king-size double bed, raises a corner of the mattress, reaches in and pulls out the tan leather suitcase. She stands there for a moment deep in thought. Then she turns her head and looks towards the double doors that connect her suite to Larry's.

INT. LARRY'S SUITE (INTERCUT WITH BRENDA'S SUITE)

Larry is wide awake, propped up in bed on top of the covers, in a reflective mood. He reacts as he HEARS the unmistakable SOUND of BRENDA'S CONNECTING DOOR BEING UNLOCKED AND OPENED, and then a SOFT KNOCKING on his connecting door. He bounds out of bed, goes to the connecting door, unlocks it and pulls it open, and there is Brenda, standing before him on her side of the doorway, a breathtaking, alluring vision in gauzy white, with the tan leather suitcase in her hand. He tries not to show how overwhelmed he is at the sight of her, and she too makes an effort to appear unmindful of his bare-chested attractiveness, but neither of them succeeds too well.

BRENDA

I...haven't gone to bed yet...

LARRY

(almost dumbstruck)

Me either...

BRENDA

I...just had a visitor...

LARRY

(gazing at her raptly)

A visitor...

BRENDA

Tony Mazzarini...He had a gun...

LARRY

(hardly listening)

You're so beautiful...

BRENDA

I opened the door for him, thinking
it was you...

LARRY

(adoringly)

I'm so grateful...

BRENDA

If he should go to the front desk and
find out that I lied to him about this...
(she holds up the
suitcase)
...He may come back again...

LARRY

We may have to do something about that...

BRENDA

Yes...

LARRY

In union there is strength...

BRENDA

That's what I was thinking...

LARRY

And I've never felt more like union
in my whole life...

BRENDA

It's the only sensible thing to do...

LARRY

Would you mind putting that down for
a moment?

Brenda sets the suitcase down and stands before him. He moves closer to her and takes her in his arms. He kisses her on the forehead, then on each cheek. He kisses her eyes and the tip of her nose. Then finally he kisses her on the lips for a long long time. She moans softly, and her hands go to the back of his head, and she begins to answer his kisses with rising ardor. And now they begin to murmur to each other through

their kisses and caresses as their passion mounts:

BRENDA
This is not like me, is it...?

LARRY
I adore you anyway...

BRENDA
You think maybe it's jet lag...?

LARRY
Don't ever stop flying...

BRENDA
I want to take off with you...

LARRY
Yes, take off together...

BRENDA
Darling...

LARRY
Love...

BRENDA
What'll we do with the money...?

LARRY
I can't think now. Let's just sleep
on it...

BRENDA
Your room or mine?

LARRY
The way I feel now? Both...

They laugh, and then they come together in a deep kiss,
and now there are no longer any words between them.

INT. LARRY'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

WE DUPLICATE THE FAMOUS SCARLETT O'HARA MORNING-AFTER
SCENE, except that, in this one, it is Larry who is lying
in bed, stretching, with a look of blissful contentment on
his face as he remembers everything. He glances at the
disheveled but now empty place beside him on the big bed,
and calls out:

LARRY
Honey...?

Getting no reply, he gets out of bed, slips on his pajama top to go with the bottoms, and goes through the wide-open connecting doors into Brenda's suite.

INT. BRENDA'S HOTEL SUITE & EXT. BALCONY

As Larry enters Brenda's living room, he sees that the sliding door to the balcony is open. He goes out to the balcony, and there lies Brenda, in the hammock, wearing nothing but Larry's dressing gown, and looking very blissful herself. She smiles at Larry as he approaches her.

LARRY

Who said you could wear my dressing gown?

BRENDA

It's the next best thing to having you wrapped around me...

Larry leans down and kisses her. She reaches up and holds him close.

LARRY

I think I'll have you for breakfast instead of orange juice...

BRENDA

(between kisses)

Look out there first.

With her right hand she points off. Larry straightens up, turns and looks off towards the bay.

THE QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 - EXT. ACAPULCO BAY - LARRY'S P.O.V.

The giant ocean liner lies at anchor in the bay. Large motor launches can be seen going to and from the ship.

LARRY'S VOICE

(o.s.)

Isn't that the QE2?

BRENDA'S VOICE

Yes, it is...

BRENDA AND LARRY

LARRY

Was it there last night?

BRENDA

No, it wasn't...

(Larry turns to her)

I already checked with the desk
downstairs...Around-the-world cruise...
Came in at eight this morning, leaves
at seven tonight...

Larry looks off again, eyes narrowing thoughtfully. Brenda gets out of the hammock, comes over to him. He turns to her, puts his arms around her waist and kisses her throat.

BRENDA

Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

LARRY

No, if you were thinking what I'm thinking
we wouldn't be out here...

(he glances off towards
the ship)

But come to think of it, I think I
know what you're thinking, and you
may be right...

(he looks at her
ruefully)

Let's hurry and get dressed, dammit.

FULL SHOT - THE QE2 - DAY

It is anchored in the bay.

INT. OFFICE OF CHIEF STEWARD ABOARD THE QE2 - DAY

START CLOSE on a passenger list, with a man's finger running down a succession of names, with the MAN'S VOICE over the shot saying:

MAN'S VOICE

Paberman...Pabst...Pace...Pacelli...
Peterson...Pittman...Proctor...Putnam...
Pyzaric...and that's it, I'm afraid...

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL THE CHIEF STEWARD addressing Brenda and Larry:

CHIEF STEWARD

Nobody named Paddington aboard. I'm
terribly sorry.

BRENDA
(disappointed)
You've been very kind to us.

CHIEF STEWARD
I wish I could have been more helpful.
He closes his book.

LARRY
Thank you again.

CHIEF STEWARD
You're welcome, sir.

Brenda and Larry start away. Brenda is in deep thought.
Suddenly she stops and turns.

BRENDA
I hate to bother you again, but
could we take a quick look at the
Z's?

CHIEF STEWARD
The Z's?

BRENDA
Please.

Larry looks at Brenda with puzzlement. The Chief Steward
opens the passenger list again, turns some pages, as
Brenda goes to his side.

CHIEF STEWARD
(examining the list)
Here we are...Oh dear...Only two
entries...Mr. and Mrs. Leo Zelinka...
(Brenda's face falls)
And Mr. and Mrs. Dylan Zweig...

BRENDA
(repeating slowly)
Mr. ...and Mrs. Dylan--
(exitedly to Larry)
Mrs. Dylan Zweig...Jenny!

MOTOR LAUNCH IN MOTION - EXT. ACAPULCO BAY - DAY

START CLOSE on JENNIFER PADDINGTON and DYLAN ZWEIG in the
motor launch that is taking about fifty cruise passengers
ashore from the QE2, which is seen in the background. Jennifer
is an attractive, appealing, flaxen-haired young woman of twenty.
Dylan, twenty-six, is tall, gangly, disheveled, bespectacled and

excessively earnest. Jenny is holding onto Dylan's hand (which he cannot pry loose), looking about at the wondrous sights of Acapulco Bay's shoreline with great excitement on her face. Dylan is appraising the scene with disdainful eyes. Seated near them on the crowded launch are SAM and GRACE BLOOMQUIST, a good-natured elderly couple whose hearts are still young and gay.

JENNY

God, isn't it super? Don't you wish you could stay here forever?

DYLAN

(deadpan)

Not so loud, Jenny. You'll frighten the sharks away.

JENNY

Oh, I can't wait to see it all and do it all...

DYLAN

(glancing about)

Rome wasn't built in a day, but I'll bet this place was.

JENNY

(lovingly)

Don't be such a sourpuss, Sourpuss, and give me a kiss.

DYLAN

Here?

JENNY

No, here.

She grabs his head and plants a big kiss on his mouth. Watching them with big smiles are Sam and Grace Bloomquist.

SAM

When are you two going to stop acting like honeymooners?

DYLAN

When does this cruise end? In exactly sixty eight days.

JENNY

Never never never.

SAM
I'm getting jealous.

Grace Bloomquist grabs Sam and gives him a big one on the mouth.

GRACE
There.

EXT. FISCAL WHARF - DAY (MASTER SCENE)

A small crowd of natives and tourists looks on as the motor launch pulls alongside the wharf and disgorges its passengers. In that crowd we SEE Tony Mazzarini, peering at the latest arrivals with intense interest. He reacts and steps forward to the edge of the crowd as he SEES Dylan and Jenny approaching, followed by the Bloomquists. CAMERA is on Dylan and Jenny now:

JENNY
...One of my secret passions is Aztec culture...

DYLAN
(drily)
You are now in Acapulco, where the personification of culture is a man water skiing on one foot while mixing a perfect margarita with the other.

JENNY
Pooh.

Dylan, looking off, suddenly reacts as he SEES Tony Mazzarini subtly trying to catch his attention without calling attention to himself. Dismayed, Dylan glances furtively at Jenny to see if she has noticed anything. Dylan turns and sees that the Bloomquists are looking elsewhere. He seizes the moment to indicate to Mazzarini, with fierce gestures, that he does not wish to acknowledge him because of Jenny's presence. Mazzarini motions angrily to Dylan to join him. Dylan waves him off and continues on with Jenny towards the Motor Coach that is waiting to take the cruise passengers on a shore excursion. As they near the bus, Dylan glances apprehensively over his shoulder and SEES that Mazzarini is following him, a few feet to the rear of the Bloomquists. Dylan turns suddenly to Jenny and brings her to a halt (The Bloomquists go on ahead, then slow down and turn; Mazzarini wanders over to the edge of the wharf and bides his time):

DYLAN
Honey, don't get angry with me now, but I just realized that I have to call my publisher in New York...

JENNY

Now?

DYLAN

Yes. You go on ahead with the Bloomquists--

SAM

Delighted.

DYLAN

--And I'll catch up with you by taxi in a jiffy, I promise.

JENNY

How will you find us?

DYLAN

I've got your whole itinerary. No problem.

JENNY

Oh sweetie, our first separation.

She kisses Dylan, and then climbs into the Motor Coach.

GRACE

Don't worry about her, Dylan.

The Bloomquists follow Jenny into the Motor Coach. Dylan turns, SEES Tony Mazzarini walking towards a small cafe at the foot of the wharf. As soon as the bus pulls away, Dylan goes after Mazzarini.

INT. CAFE

A rundown place, relatively empty of customers. Mazzarini enters, stops at the bar, says a few words in Spanish to the bartender in a low voice. The bartender nods, reaches for a bottle. Mazzarini goes to a table in the rear and sits down facing the entrance. Dylan enters, sees him and comes over to the table.

MAZZARINI

You're lookin' good, kid.
Marriage must agree with you.

DYLAN

(sitting down)

Never mind that. What are you doing down here in Mexico following me? Suppose Jenny saw us together and I had to tell her that you loaned me the money for our honeymoon?

MAZZARINI
 (a little insulted)
 What's she gonna do, divorce you 'cause
 I ain't Manufacturer's Trust or something?

DYLAN
 It just wouldn't look good, that's all.
 She thinks of me as a man of letters, not
 someone who's been playing the horses
 just to be able to pay cabfares and
 restaurant bills.

The bartender sets drinks before each of them and leaves.

MAZZARINI
 (raises his glass)
 To a happy life for the newlyweds.

DYLAN
 (raises his glass, drinks)
 Jesus, this is strong? What is it?

MAZZARINI
 Specialty of the house. Puts hair on
 your hair.

DYLAN
 (looks at Mazzarini)
 Okay, shoot.

MAZZARINI
 I ain't shootin' anyone today. It's
 my day off.

DYLAN
 I'm really in a hurry, Mazzarini. What
 is it you want?

MAZZARINI
 A little favor, that's all.

DYLAN
 So?

MAZZARINI
 Remember how you told me you were gonna
 keep your little wifey incommunicadio
 on the QE2?

DYLAN
 Incommunicado.

MAZZARINI

--So's her old man wouldn't hear
about the elopement until you got
your debts cleared up and your act
together?

DYLAN

It hasn't been easy, but we've managed
to keep out of touch with the world.

MAZZARINI

(raising his glass
again)

To more incommunicadio...

Dylan clicks his glass and drinks again, wincing.

MAZZARINI

So while you two lovebirds are flittin'
around on the high seas, your friend
Mazzarini decides to take advantage of
the situation and pull off a little sting
on old man Paddington while his daughter
is out of circulation, so to speak...

DYLAN

(eyes narrowing)

What are you talking about?
What did you do?

MAZZARINI

(shrugs)

Nothing serious. Me and my boys just
convinced Paddington that his Jenny was
kidnapped, that's all.

DYLAN

(stunned)

Kidnapped!

MAZZARINI

--And we got the old skinflint to
cough up a three million dollar ransom.

DYLAN

You what?

MAZZARINI

Only trouble is, I can't get my hands
on the dough, which is right here in
Acapulco, unless I can produce Jenny and
hand her over in return for the three million.
You get what I'm driving at?

DYLAN

(stares at him a moment)
Yes, I do get what you're driving at,
and I may throw up all over you, Mazzarini.

MAZZARINI

Gee, that wouldn't be nice, kid.

DYLAN

You're disgusting. You must be out of
your mind.

MAZZARINI

You won't even consider it?

DYLAN

Never. No way. It's unthinkable.

MAZZARINI

Not even for a couple of hours today,
before the ship sails? That's all I'd
need her for.

DYLAN

Not even for a couple of seconds.

MAZZARINI

You're into me for an awful lot of
money, kid.

DYLAN

Don't talk to me about money. I love
that girl. She loves me. I'd kill
before I'd let anyone touch her.
It's the most horrible, evil, immoral,
unethical, criminal idea I've ever had
thrown at me. I can't believe you mean
it.

MAZZARINI

(stung)

You didn't think I was such a terrible
person when your buddies introduced you
to my books and we carried you, now did
you?

DYLAN

Look, I did a lot of stupid things trying
to convince Jenny's father that I'd be
able to support her. Betting on horses
was just one of them, and now I'm beginning
to think letting you finance this honeymoon
trip was the worst of them.

MAZZARINI

Not if you accomodate me now, kid.
I'll wipe the books clean of every
penny you owe me...

DYLAN

(angrily)

You weren't doing me any favors. You
were setting me up so you could rip off
Jenny's father. I can see it all now.

He tries to get to his feet, but suddenly he is overcome
with dizziness and falls back into his chair.

DYLAN

(looks at his glass)

My God...This drink...what have
you done to me?

MAZZARINI

(smiles)

I think they call it a Mickey Margarita.

DYLAN

(trying to rise again)

You knew I'd never go along with
this filthy idea, didn't you?

MAZZARINI

Sure kid, but I figured I owed it
to you to explain to you why it had
to be done, before I went out and
did it.

Dylan scrapes his chair back and lurches to his feet.

DYLAN

But I'm not going to let you...

(he begins to sway

dizzily)

You're not going to touch Jenny...

Mazzarini makes a hand signal. Frederick the albino steps out
of the doorway behind Dylan. Dylan starts to turn. Frederick
steps forward and reaches the table just in time to catch
Dylan before he slumps to the floor. Mazzarini rises.

MAZZARINI

Take him back to the Queen and let
him sleep it off in his cabin. And
don't be long.

He walks away. Passing the bar, he calls out to the bartender:
"Gracias, amigo!" Then he exits.

BRENDA AND LARRY IN SPEEDBOAT - EXT. ACAPULCO BAY - DAY

The speedboat is cutting through the water, kicking up spray, on its way from the QE2 to the wharf. Larry is behind the steering wheel. Brenda is beside him, studying an 8 x 10 glossy of Jenny and Dylan taken on the ship.

BRENDA

I keep telling myself nothing can happen to her as long as she's with Dylan...

LARRY

Don't keep telling yourself. Tell your friend Mazzarini.

BRENDA

I'll bet she's on one of the busses...

LARRY

You may be right.

BRENDA

Or else they took a cab...

LARRY

You may be right.

BRENDA

At the very least, we should cover Puerto Marques Village, the Princess Hotel, Las Brisas, the Yacht Club, the El Presidente Hotel and Condesa Beach...

LARRY

You take the high road and I'll take the low road.

BRENDA

Meet back at the hotel?

Larry has been peering off.

LARRY

Don't look now, but...

Brenda follows his gaze, SEES (in a P.O.V. SHOT) Frederick the albino piloting a speedboat some distance to their left on his way to the QE2. He appears to be alone in the boat, and is oblivious to them as the two boats pass each other.

LARRY

I think I liked him better in the snow.

MOVING MEDIUM SHOT - FREDERICK IN THE SPEEDBOAT

He is looking straight ahead. Behind him we see the other speedboat traveling away. Now Frederick turns in his seat and looks off behind him, and it becomes immediately apparent that he has seen Brenda and Larry. He looks down behind him into his boat.

BRIEF CLOSEUP OF DYLAN ZWEIG

He is curled up in the bottom of the boat, sleeping peacefully.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE -- SERIES OF BRIEF SHOTS OF BRENDA, ALONE, AND LARRY, ALONE, SEARCHING FOR JENNIFER PADDINGTON AMONG THE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND OTHER SCENIC WONDERS OF ACAPULCO...

INTERCUTTING BETWEEN BRENDA'S SEARCH AND LARRY'S SEARCH, WE ALSO INTERSPERSE SHOTS OF JENNY ON HER EXCURSION, SOMETIMES BY HERSELF, SOMETIMES WITH SAM AND GRACE BLOOMQUIST.

BRENDA AND LARRY GET AROUND IN TAXIS. JENNY, OF COURSE, IS ON THE EXCURSION BUS.

THERE ARE SEVERAL NEAR MISSES IN THE SEQUENCE:

LARRY pulls up at the entrance of THE PRINCESS HOTEL, sees an empty excursion bus (It is Jenny's). He rushes into the hotel just as PANNING CAMERA picks up Jenny and other excursionists emerging from the gardens near the bus. INSIDE THE HOTEL, Larry goes up elevators, down elevators, through every exotic area of the colorful hotel, searching for Jenny. Finally he goes outside again. THE BUS IS GONE.

SHOOTING TOWARDS THE ENTRANCE TO LAS BRISAS, we see a cab on its way out. CAMERA PANS with the cab, reveals BRENDA in the back seat, peering out. The cab goes off to the left. CAMERA PANS right, picks up an excursion bus entering Las Brisas from the opposite direction. The bus stops, and one of the first to get out is Jenny.

Taxiing through THE CENTER OF THE CITY, LARRY sees an excursion bus approaching and pass which might be the one he had seen at the Princess Hotel. He jabs his driver in the shoulder, and we go to an OBJECTIVE SHOT showing the cab making a precarious, traffic-jamming, horn-honking U-turn. Larry's cab pursues the bus, eventually catches up with it, follows it to Hotel El Presidente. Larry leaps out of the cab just as the bus starts disgorging its passengers -- all 75 of them -- all Japanese.

EXT. CONDESA BEACH - DAY

We are at the water's edge about a hundred yards to the left of the HOTEL INTERNATIONAL (formerly the Hilton). Jenny Zweig (formerly the Paddington) is standing beside Sam Bloomquist as they, along with a dozen other excursionists, wave and shout encouragement to Grace Bloomquist, who is soaring 150 feet above the water on the dangling end of a parachute being towed by a speedboat on the homeward turn of Acapulco's famous Parachute Ride. We intercut between shots of Jenny and Sam waving their arms skyward, to a moving close shot of the elderly Grace against the sky, strapped in her harness, grinning and waving to those down below. Now Jenny turns away from the water, looks up and down the beach searchingly, then towards the hotel, with a troubled expression on her face. Sam Bloomquist glances at her and sees her distraction.

SAM

Come on, Jenny. You'll miss the landing.

JENNY

I'm beginning to get annoyed with him.

SAM

He'll find us. Don't worry.

JENNY

You don't know Dylan. He'd use any excuse to get out of a day like this.

SAM

(looking skyward)

There's my girl. Here she comes.

Grace comes floating over the beach. Several young Mexican boys in swimming trunks move forward, reach up for her, and she comes down gently into their grasp, as the group on the beach breaks into cheers and applause.

GROUP
(ad lib)

Superlady...You did it, Mrs. Bloomquist...
Wanna try it now without the parachute?...
How was it...?

GRACE
Wonderful...thrilling...

SAM
Proud of ya, honey.

GRACE
(as she gets unharnessed)
You've got to do it, Sam. It's so
exciting...

SAM
Not on your life.

GRACE
Why not?

SAM
I'm fried chicken, that's why not.
Jenny's going to go now, aren't you,
Jenny?

JENNY
No, I think I'll wait.

SAM
No you won't. Up you go, young lady.
It'll take your mind off Dylan.

He signals to the Mexican boys to harness Jenny.

JENNY
Will you keep an eye out?

SAM
Both of 'em.

The Mexicans approach Jenny with the harness. She
unfastens her skirt, revealing a bikini bottom underneath,
takes off her sandals, and hands everything to Sam.

EXT. HOTEL INTERNATIONAL - DAY

Brenda is emerging from the hotel ON THE BEACHSIDE, eyes
searching right and left. She crosses the pool area, hurries

through the outdoor restaurant, goes down the ramp to the beach area, goes through the rows of cabanas beneath the palm trees and out to the open beach. Halfway to the water's edge, she stops and looks in all directions, shielding her eyes against the sun. Looking toward the distinctive, rocky, mini-mountain that rises from the bay, just offshore near the site of the start of the Parachute Ride, Brenda's interest quickens. She goes over to a sun-tanned, elderly ENGLISHMAN who is standing nearby, peering out across the bay through a pair of field glasses.

BRENDA

(with urgency)

Could I be very rude and look through those just for a moment?

ENGLISHMAN

(happily)

Please do, dear girl, please do...

Brenda grabs the glasses from him with an abruptness that startles him, and quickly raises them to her eyes.

BRENDA'S P.O.V. THROUGH THE FIELD GLASSES

Jenny can be seen clearly for a moment, then obscured by others, then in the clear again. She is strapped in the harness now, and the Mexican boys are arranging the parachute for takeoff.

BRENDA

(over the shot, uncertainly)

Jenny...?

BRENDA ON THE BEACH

Quickly she lowers the glasses, extracts the 8 x 10 glossy photograph from her canvas shoulderbag, takes a quick look at it, stuffs it in the bag and looks through the glasses again.

BRENDA'S P.O.V. THROUGH THE FIELD GLASSES

Jenny is clearly seen bracing herself for the takeoff.

BRENDA'S VOICE

(o.s., with certainty)

Jenny...

The P.O.V. shot pans quickly along the line of the tow cable to the speedboat that will be doing the towing. The boat is visible from Brenda's vantage point, but is obscured to the view of those at the start site by the rock formation just offshore. We see another speedboat approaching and coming alongside with Frederick the albino at the wheel and Harry, in swimming trunks, beside him. Harry leaps into the towboat. The pilot of the towboat rises in protest, and is promptly shoved overboard. Frederick speeds away, leaving the man in the water to fend for himself, and Harry quickly gets behind the wheel of the towboat and guns the motor. ALL THIS HAPPENS IN A FEW SECONDS.

BRENDA ON THE BEACH

She lowers the glasses, starts running towards the start site calling out:

BRENDA

Jenny!...

ENGLISHMAN'S VOICE

(calling out, o.s.)

Wait...Young lady...My glasses...

Brenda hears him, realizes that she is running off with the field glasses. She comes to a quick stop, turns, runs back to the man.

BRENDA

(breathlessly)

I'm sorry...Thank you...I'm sorry...

ENGLISHMAN

(taking the proffered glasses)

Quite all right...

Brenda turns, starts running again, looking off, and comes to a sudden stop.

BRENDA'S P.O.V.

Jenny has already gone into her takeoff, a few feet above the water. The towboat, driven by Harry, gathers speed, and Jenny rises in the air, higher and higher.

CLOSEUP OF BRENDA

Watching Jenny's ride tensely.

BRENDA'S P.O.V.

Jenny is 150 feet up now, and the towboat is going unnaturally, unnervingly fast, and it is hauling Jenny not in a wide semicircle around the rocks and back towards the beach, but instead -- straight out across the water to the open sea or some distant place, and Jenny is rapidly becoming a speck in the sky.

BRENDA ON THE BEACH

Staring off. The Englishman appears beside her, looking off in the same direction.

ENGLISHMAN

I say...that's a bit odd, isn't it?

BRENDA

(bitterly)

I blew it...

ENGLISHMAN

(not comprehending)

Beg your pardon?

Brenda glances about desperately, SEES a Mexican beach-boy jumping out of his small speedboat and hauling it up onto the sand. She runs over to the boat, arriving just as the young Mexican starts away.

BRENDA

Wait...

(the Mexican turns, looks at her quizzically.

She gets into the boat and points out to sea)

Follow that parachute.

The Mexican looks at her a moment, then breaks into a huge grin.

MEXICAN

Ees fonny...

(laughs)

Ees ...very fonny...

He walks away, chuckling. Brenda turns, looks off at the vanishing Jenny, makes a quick decision. She scrambles out of the speedboat onto the sand, pushes the boat back into the water, climbs back into the boat, fumbles with the controls, starts the motor and guns it. The beachboy stops in his tracks, turns and starts running towards the water, shouting. But Brenda is already speeding out into the bay.

WITH BRENDA IN SPEEDBOAT - (CHASE SEQUENCE ON ACAPULCO BAY)

Brenda may never have operated a speedboat before, but that doesn't stop her from racing across the choppy waters at seventy miles an hour, bumping and skipping along the crest of the waves, boat leaping out of the water and crashing down again, sending up clouds of spray, hot in pursuit of Jenny's parachute. Other boats in Brenda's path maneuver frantically to avoid her wild course. Boat whistles shriek, horns blow, voices shout. Two men with fishing rods anchored in a small fishing boat see Brenda racing towards them. They stand up, wave their arms frantically, then dive into the water just as Brenda speeds by, missing them and their boat by inches.

INTERCUTTING between Brenda's speedboat and the boat towing Jenny in the parachute, we see that Brenda is gaining on her quarry.

Suddenly another speedboat roars into the chase. Frederick the albino in his speedboat is seen coming after Brenda at tremendous speed. Brenda looks over her shoulder, sees him coming. His boat is larger and more powerful. He gains on her rapidly, finally overtakes her, speeds alongside her, inches away. She tries to avoid him with wild maneuvers. He matches her maneuvers with his own. They are speeding side by side now at seventy miles an hour. The albino swerves his boat and bumps Brenda's side. Her boat bounces off and keeps going. Frederick slams into her again. She still keeps going. He pulls ahead of her, swerves to his right, tries to cut her off. She swerves sharply to her left, zooms past his stern. He swings around, overtakes her, keeps bumping her from the other side, then forges ahead of her, swerves to his left and cuts her off again. She makes a violent maneuver to avoid him. Her boat leaps out of the water and overturns and Brenda disappears beneath the capsized craft. The albino circles the spot for a minute or two, and then suddenly Brenda pops up out of the water, gasping for breath, and clings to the side of her capsized boat.

A nearby pleasure boat with several young people in it speeds towards Brenda to rescue her.

The albino immediately swerves away and speeds off in the direction of Jenny's rapidly disappearing parachute.

From the water, Brenda watches in dismay as Jenny's parachute disappears around a bend.

INT. BRENDA'S HOTEL SUITE & EXT. BALCONY - A LITTLE LATER - DAY

Larry is lying on the sofa with a tall drink in his hand. Brenda is out on the balcony, looking out to sea, then turning to come back inside and resume her nervous pacing.

BRENDA
(agitated)
She's out there somewhere...

LARRY
We know that.

BRENDA
I feel there's something we should be doing--

LARRY
We're doing it.

BRENDA
--Instead of just sitting around...

LARRY
We're not sitting around. I'm lying down and you're pacing.

BRENDA
I mean it, Larry.

LARRY
(as he gets up
from the sofa)
Look, we're not just "sitting around."
We're sitting around with three million dollars, which is a great big difference. It means that either that door over there is going to go "knock knock" or that telephone is going to go "ring ring" and we better be here to answer...

BRENDA
Can you imagine what Arthur Paddington must be thinking, not hearing a word from me?

LARRY
He's thinking you ran off with his money, and he's right.

BRENDA
You're a big comfort.

LARRY
If he knew all the facts, he might be even less happy with you...

BRENDA
(stops and faces him)
What facts? What are you talking about?

LARRY
(waves her off)
Forget it. You wouldn't want to hear it.

BRENDA
(insistent)
Tell me.

Larry looks at her searchingly, as though trying to assess her ability to hear what he wants to say. When he speaks, his tone is quietly serious.

LARRY
You've bungled things from the very beginning, Brenda, but you move so fast that the truth never has a chance to catch up with you.

BRENDA
(stung)
You're not saying anything. You're just making unpleasant sounds.

LARRY
If you had stayed in Chicago where you belong, the kidnapping hoax would have died a natural death with no harm done. There was no victim. Jenny was on a cruise, that was all. And Paddington wasn't going to come across with a nickel until he was convinced that someone really had his daughter. So what did you do? You decided, on your own, to fly to Megève, not to save a young girl in distress but to get a story, a God damn newspaper story. Am I right so far?

BRENDA
(eyes glistening)
Go ahead...I'm listening...

LARRY

You didn't let me in on anything. You sure as hell didn't call in the police. You played it close to the vest. It was going to be another Brenda Starr exclusive. So you flew to Megève, misidentified Jenny, incorrectly assured Paddington that you were in the presence of his daughter, improperly caused him to come through with a huge ransom payment, which you misguidedly picked up in Geneva and possibly, God only knows, were indirectly responsible for the death of that unfortunate girl--

BRENDA

(through tears)

You don't know that...

LARRY

I said possibly. They certainly didn't need her after you had fallen for their little charade. And then you made the foolish decision to come down here to Acapulco, with all the money, because you thought Jenny was being held here or something, except that, as it turned out, you were wrong. She was only passing through, on her honeymoon, and would have continued on her honeymoon if you and that ransom money hadn't come down here and made it practically mandatory that they grab her now and turn a hoax into the real thing. Have I said enough?

Brenda turns away from him without answering, shaken by what she has heard. She doesn't say anything for a few moments, then speaks quietly:

BRENDA

I'm not blaming you, but why didn't you try harder to stop me?

LARRY

(gently)

How could I? You kept getting more adorable, more desirable, more irresistible, every moment we were together...

(he goes over to her,
turns her around and puts
his arms about her)

LARRY

(cont.)

I don't know what the hell to do about you anymore. The more you screw things up, the more I seem to love you...

Brenda manages a wan smile.

BRENDA

Suppose I were to do something right?

LARRY

I don't know. Shall we give it a try?

They gaze into each other's eyes, then hold each other closely. Just then, the TELEPHONE RINGS. Brenda stiffens. Larry looks towards the ringing phone.

LARRY

You or me?

Brenda leaves his arms, goes over to the phone, picks it up.

BRENDA

(to phone)

Hello?

(listens)

Speaking...

(nods to Larry,

listens)

Yes, I know the place. Is she with you?

(listens)

Then what would be the purpose of a meeting?

(listens)

Very well...

(listens)

Right away.

The connection is broken. Brenda hangs up.

LARRY

Him?

BRENDA

(nods)

He's waiting for us, alone, on the terrace of La Perla at the El Mirador Hotel. That's where they watch the high divers perform. If we bring our most valuable piece of luggage along, everything will have a happy ending...he says.

LARRY
 (looks at her
 a moment)
 Do you trust him?

BRENDA
 Of course not.

EXT. HOTEL EL MIRADOR & THE QUEBRADA - DAY

There is a large, plaza-like parking area. Next to it is the Hotel El Mirador. The hotel is on several levels. There is an upper terrace above the lobby, and a lower terrace two levels below the lobby, the latter terrace being a nightclub-cafe called LA PERLA. Both terraces are open-air, and famous for their view of the Quebrada -- a series of rocky cliffs jutting out into the sea, with angry waters churning in the shallow gorges between the promontories. From the parking area, near the hotel entrance and the separate entrance to La Perla, a series of 100 stone steps on a gradual incline lead down to a smooth stone lookout platform called the Belvedere. It overlooks the narrow gorge into which the performing high-divers swan-dive from the edge of the steepest cliff, on the other side of the gorge and 200 feet above it.

Looking out from the open terrace of La Perla, SLIGHTLY TO ONE'S LEFT one sees the stone steps leading down to the Belvedere. STRAIGHT AHEAD one sees the gorge and the steep cliff that is the jump-off point for the high-divers. SLIGHTLY TO ONE'S RIGHT one sees a sloping rocky hill behind the diver's ledge, and on top of the hill, a dome-like ALTAR at which the divers pray just before making their dangerous leap. FARTHER TO ONE'S RIGHT behind the edge of the cliff and the altar are the hotel's COTTAGES, perched on the rocks facing the gorges and the sea. From the topmost level of the main building of the hotel, there is a stairway leading to a FOOTPATH that snakes through the cottage area. Branching out to the left of this footpath is a very narrow, seldom-used and very precarious pathway leading to the diver's altar, and to the edge of the cliff from which they jump. This narrow path is visible from the terraces and from the Belvedere.

AT START OF SCENE, a taxi enters the PARKING AREA and comes to a stop before THE ENTRANCE TO THE EL MIRADOR. Larry gets out, then helps Brenda out. She is carrying the attache case. As the cab drives away, Larry and Brenda stand there for a moment, taking in their surroundings. There are some excursion busses in the parking area, and sightseers milling about. To the left of the hotel entrance is another entrance indicating LA PERLA. Larry points to it, and they enter.

INT. & EXT. EL MIRADOR HOTEL & LA PERLA TERRACE

Brenda and Larry go down the stairway past the first level off the dining room area, descend one more level and step out onto the terrace of La Perla. The tables are filled, and many excursionists are standing about, looking off at the magnificent view of the Quebrada. Brenda and Larry see Tony Mazzarini seated alone at a table to their left, and start towards him. Mazzarini sees them approaching and gets to his feet.

MAZZARINI

Perfect. Just in time for the show.

BRENDA

(coolly)

This is Mr. Nickels. I don't believe you two have met.

MAZZARINI

(proffering a hand)

How ya doin', Mr. Nickels?

LARRY

(shaking his hand)

Oh, struggling along.

They all sit down at the table, and Brenda shoves the attache case in front of Mazzarini. He gives it a casual glance.

MAZZARINI

Nice leather. You buy it down here?

BRENDA

Open it.

MAZZARINI

What for?

BRENDA

Open it.

Mazzarini shrugs, opens the attache case, tries to feign disinterest but his bulging eyes give him away as he looks inside. He quickly shuts the case, slides it back to Brenda and looks up.

MAZZARINI

So what'll you folks have to drink?

BRENDA

Nothing for me.

LARRY
 (shakes his head)
 Let's get down to business, shall we?

MAZZARINI
 Business? I'm in Acapulco for pleasure.

BRENDA
 (sharply)
 Where is she?

MAZZARINI
 Who?

BRENDA
 Guess.

MAZZARINI
 You mean that nice young girl whose parachute ride got blown off course today?

BRENDA
 Good for you.

MAZZARINI
 (chuckles)
 Where do you think she landed?
 Right on the front lawn of my villa...

LARRY
 Some girls have all the luck.

BRENDA
 (tersely)
 We want her back. End of conversation.

MAZZARINI
 (as if offended)
 Hey, don't go makin' it sound like I'm holdin' onto her or something.

BRENDA
 Forgive me.

MAZZARINI
 She's been lookin' for her husband all day. He got sidetracked this morning, and he was supposed to catch up with her along the way, but they must've missed signals. So these two guys who stopped their carto watch her come down on my lawn, they offered to drive her around and help her look for him...

BRENDA
What two guys?

LARRY
I'll lay you ten to one one of
them has no eyebrows.

MAZZARINI
Total strangers, but nice fellahs.
One of 'em just phoned me and said
she's havin' a ball, like a personally
guided tour of the town...

BRENDA
Where is she right now?

MAZZARINI
Beats me. But this guy said to me
on the phone, he said that at exactly
four fifteen -- that's about twenty
minutes from now -- they're gonna drop
her off right here...

BRENDA
At La Perla?

MAZZARINI
Yep, right here...because the guys
did some phonin' around and told her
they found out that her husband's gonna
be here to meet her at four fifteen...

Brenda and Larry look at each other.

MAZZARINI
However...

Brenda and Larry look at Mazzarini.

MAZZARINI
I happen to know that hubby ain't
gonna be here at all. He's back in
his cabin on the QE2 sleepin' off a
hangover. And bein' as I gotta run
along, I figured maybe you two wouldn't
mind waitin' here and givin' her the
message that she should take a taxi to
the motor launch and go back to the
QE2 right away. How about it?

Brenda and Larry exchange glances again.

BRENDA
(to Mazzarini)
All right, what's the catch?

MAZZARINI

You know you talk crazy sometimes? Why should there be a catch? It's this simple...

(to Brenda)

The girl arrives, you give her the message...

(to Larry)

You take her upstairs and put her in a cab...

(to Brenda)

...While you stay right here with that piece of leather goods...

(to Larry)

As soon as the girl's cab drives away, you go down those stone steps outside leadin' down there...

(he points)

...To that lookout spot. See it?

(Larry looks off, nods.)

Mazzarini turns to Brenda)

When he gets down there, he's gonna turn and wave up here to you. Then you're gonna get up from this table, go out the entrance and down the stone steps, and you're gonna join him down there. And the two of you are gonna stay down there where we can watch you and you can't make trouble...ten minutes, fifteen minutes, stay as long as you like, just don't come back up too soon. Any questions?

LARRY

Haven't you left one thing out?

MAZZARINI

Oh yeah, you're right. I don't want you to get mad at this nice lady here and holler at her when you say "Where's the suitcase?" and she says "Oh dear, I must have left it on the chair at the table." Say something nice, like "That's okay, honey, if it isn't there we can always buy another one."

(Brenda and Larry look at each other)

Say, I gotta run along now...

(he gets to his feet)

Adios, folks.

BRENDA

(challengingly)

Not for long, Mr. Mazzarini. You'll be seeing me in Chicago.

MAZZARINI

(smiles)

All the way from Brazil? I kinda doubt it, lady.

BRENDA

Have you forgotten? Kidnapping is extraditable.

MAZZARINI

What kidnapping? There wasn't any last week, there wasn't any today. Because you happen to leave something on a chair, you call that kidnapping?

He shrugs. Then he turns and walks away from them. Larry watches him go.

LARRY

If that man were in drag, I'd say he knows how to keep his skirts clean.

BRENDA

(preoccupied)

The question is, what do we do?

LARRY

(quickly)

Exactly what we've been told to do...

(no response)

Right?

(points a warning finger at her)

Right?

BRENDA

(not too convincingly)

Right...

Their conversation is interrupted by a MAN'S VOICE ON THE PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM. They look off towards the bandstand at the right of the terrace. An ANNOUNCER in a white linen suit is standing at a microphone on the dance floor, BEGINNING HIS RUNNING ACCOUNT OF THE HIGH DIVING PERFORMANCE THAT IS NOW STARTING. He will give each announcement FIRST IN SPANISH, THEN IN ENGLISH, AND WE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE CONTINUALLY AS WE INTERCUT BETWEEN SHOTS DURING THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE:

THE HIGH DIVING SEQUENCE - EXT. THE QUEBRADA, THE BELVEDERE &
LA PERLA

We will follow a young MEXICAN DIVER through his performance. Interspersed with shots of him are close shots of Brenda and Larry watching the sequence of events with interest. Larry occasionally glances at Brenda with wary expression, observing her preoccupation. She glances about occasionally, looking for Jenny. Now and then we cut to the onlooking crowds on the terraces and on the Belvedere as they watch the show. (WE CUT THROUGH

TIME TO SPEED UP THE LAPSED TIME OF THE PERFORMANCE. JENNY WILL ARRIVE BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE ENDS, BEFORE SHE IS SEEN BY BRENDA). Over all shots we HEAR THE VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER.

The young diver is first seen running down the stone steps to the lookout platform, the Belvedere. He turns and waves to the applauding crowds. Then he mounts the parapet, climbs over the wall and crawls down the steep but modest cliff to the swirling waters of the gorge. He swims across the gorge, reaches the jagged base of the very high steep cliff from which he will dive, and begins to scale the side of the cliff on his way to the top. Spectators on the terraces and walks and on the Belvedere let out a cheer as he reaches the very top of the promontory, and waves.

Now the diver turns and makes his way up the rocky slope to the dome-like altar. He kneels before the altar, prays, crosses himself, rises, turns, walks slowly down the slope, down a few stone steps, and comes to the very edge of the cliff. He stands looking down at the gorge below, waiting for the pulsing sea to fill the gorge long enough for him to make his dive. He poises on the edge, arms outstretched. A hush falls over the crowd. There is a DRUMROLL from the bandstand at La Perla. Suddenly the diver leaps. There is a gasp from the crowd, and a long silence as the diver soars out and plummets down, clearing the jutting rocky base of the cliff and crashing into the swirling waters.

For several long moments the diver's body disappears beneath the surface. The silence is heavy. And then the diver comes shooting out of the water, arms triumphantly aloft, and a great cheer goes up. The cheers continue as the diver quickly swims to the base of the Belvedere, climbs up and over the parapet, stands in the center of the platform waving to the applauding crowds, and then runs, not walks, up the entire one hundred stone steps, and disappears from view.

At this moment, Brenda, for the first time, sees that Jenny has arrived and is standing at the rear of the terrace, glancing about. Jenny is barefoot, and wearing the same bikini-bottom and thin blouse she had on when she took off on the parachute ride earlier in the day.

BRENDA
(pokes Larry)
There she is...

She gets up from the table and goes over to Jenny.

BRENDA
Jennifer?

JENNY
(startled)

Yes.

BRENDA
Hi. I'm Brenda Starr.

JENNY
(brightens with recognition)
Brenda Starr. Well, hello. I'm very
pleased to meet you. And so far
from home...

BRENDA
Isn't it...

As they shake hands:

JENNY
How ever did you recognize me,
looking like this?

BRENDA
Oh, you've had your share of
photographs, Jenny...

JENNY
(laughs)
What about you?

Jenny glances about, craning her neck.

BRENDA
You're looking for Dylan...

JENNY
(glances at her quickly,
with surprise)
Yes. How on earth--?

BRENDA
(interrupting)
I have a message for you...
(Jenny frowns)
Dylan is waiting for you in your cabin...

Jenny stares at her with a serious expression.

JENNY
He's not going to be here?

BRENDA
No.

Jenny bites her lip, tries to hide the fact that something
is troubling her deeply.

BRENDA

(indicates Larry)

A friend of mine, Mr. Nickels, is going to put you in a cab now, and you're to go straight to the boat. All right?

(Jenny's lips quiver.

She nods)

Come, I'll introduce you.

She takes Jenny's arm and leads her to the table. Larry quickly gets to his feet.

BRENDA

" Larry Nickels. Jennifer Paddington Zweig.

LARRY

Hello Jenny. Congratulations.

JENNY

(to Brenda)

You know that too...

LARRY

I'll go up and see what the taxi situation is.

JENNY

I don't even have cabfare.

LARRY

(with a glance at the suitcase)
That's all right. We do.

Brenda gives Larry a look.

LARRY

Be right back.

He leaves. Brenda and Jenny sit down at the table. Brenda gazes at her with warm concern.

BRENDA

How was your day today, Jenny?

JENNY

(warily)

What do you mean?

BRENDA

Are you...all right?

JENNY

(defensively)

Fine. I'm just fine...

(suddenly she is
almost in tears)

Not true. I'm so sad I could die.

BRENDA
 (taking her hand)
 Oh Jenny...

JENNY
 We're being watched now, aren't we...

BRENDA
 Why do you say that?

JENNY
 (insistent)
 Aren't we...

BRENDA
 I don't really know.

JENNY
 They think I have no idea what's been
 going on. You probably think so too.
 I've sensed it all day...
 (Brenda stares at her)
 That attache case. Does it contain what
 I think it does?

BRENDA
 (reluctantly)
 I'm afraid so, Jenny.

JENNY
 My father?

BRENDA
 Yes.

JENNY
 (gripping her arm, desperately)
 Miss Starr, you mustn't. You absolutely
 mustn't...

BRENDA
 But Jenny...

JENNY
Listen to me, please. You don't understand.
 I think Dylan may be involved...

BRENDA
 (dismayed)
 Dylan?

JENNY
 (letting the words
 pour out)
 He's the most honest, sweetest, dearest
 man that ever lived, but he's such a baby,

JENNY

(cont.)

oh such a baby, getting all mixed up with gamblers and people like that, all because of me. He thinks if he doesn't have any money, if my father cuts us off or something, he thinks I'll leave him. And I'd never never never do that...never. They must have forced him into leaving me alone today. It couldn't have happened any other way. I didn't want to believe it was possible. I blocked it out of my mind. But I'm convinced now, and it worries me so...

BRENDA

I'm terribly sorry...

JENNY

(imploringly)

I love him, Miss Starr, and he loves me too. That's all that matters and I don't want to lose it. If nothing happens here now, if you don't go through with anything, I'll never have to say a word to him, or to anybody, ever, and you won't have to either, because there won't be anything to talk about or write about, isn't that so, Miss Starr, isn't it?

BRENDA

(torn)

Jenny, it's not that simple...

JENNY

But you can try, can't you?

BRENDA

(urgently, looking off)

Here comes-- Don't say a word about this...

Larry has arrived back at the table.

LARRY

Okay, I have a cab waiting. Let's go.

Jenny rises quickly, leans over Brenda with an impassioned whisper.

JENNY

Please?

BRENDA

Goodbye, Jenny.

LARRY
 (to Brenda, pointing off)
 From down there, the next wave
 you see will be mine.

He takes Jenny by the arm and leads her away. Brenda remains at the table, looking off with deeply troubled expression.

INT. & EXT. EL MIRADOR HOTEL

Larry and Jenny come up the separate stairway from La Perla and exit to the parking area. A taxi with motor running is waiting before the entrance. Larry helps Jenny into the cab saying:

LARRY
 He's got instructions and he's
 all paid up.

JENNY
 Thank you for everything, Mr. Nickels.

LARRY
 Happy honeymoon now.

Larry slams the door shut and the cab pulls away. He looks after it, then glances off and NOTICES a black Lincoln sedan on the other side of the parking area. The two front doors open and out step Frederick the albino and Harry.

INT. LINCOLN SEDAN

In the far corner on the back seat of the parked car sits Tony Mazzarini, lighting a cigar and looking off.

MAZZARINI'S P.O.V.

He SEES Frederick and Harry moving away from the Lincoln, crossing the parking area towards Larry and the El Mirador. Larry quickly moves to the stone steps and starts down.

BRENDA ON THE TERRACE OF LA PERLA

Still seated at the table, she is looking off and down towards the Belvedere.

BRENDA'S P.O.V.

Larry comes into view halfway down the stone steps. He runs the rest of the way down to the Belvedere, turns, looks up towards La Perla and waves his arms vigorously.

BRENDA AT LA PERLA

She rises, waves down to Larry, takes the suitcase from the table, places it on one of the chairs, takes one last look at it, then starts away from the table. Her face is very troubled. Suddenly her expression changes to one of determination. She stops, turns, hurries back to the table, grabs the suitcase from the chair and runs from the terrace with it.

BRENDA IN MOTION

She comes up the stairs from the terrace to the DINING ROOM LEVEL. On the right side of the deserted room is the separate stairway. Brenda HEARS FOOTSTEPS COMING DOWN. Quickly she crosses the dining room to ANOTHER STAIRWAY on the left leading up to the lobby. Just as she starts up those stairs, Frederick comes into view on the right side of the room, and hurries down to the terrace below.

BRENDA IN THE HOTEL LOBBY

She comes up the stairway into the lobby, clutching the attache case. She glances about to get her bearings, starts past the reception desk towards the entrance leading to the parking area. She stops suddenly as she SEES Harry standing guard outside. She backs away, sees a stairway to the left of the reception desk. Just then, Harry turns, peers through the entrance, reacts as he sees Brenda with the suitcase, a moment before she disappears up the stairway. Harry quickly enters the lobby just as Frederick comes up from La Perla with dismay on his face.

FREDERICK

It's gone.

HARRY

(points)

She's got it.

They start after Brenda.

BRIEF SHOT - LARRY ON THE BELVEDERE

He is peering up the stone steps, then up at La Perla, then up the steps again, looking in vain for Brenda.

EXT. EL MIRADOR COTTAGES

Brenda hurries over a bridge-like platform from the main building across a gorge to the pathway that leads to the red-tiled cottages perched on the rocks behind the diving cliffs. She trips on the pathway, stumbles, drops the suitcase, quickly picks it up, looks behind her, SEES:

FREDERICK AND HARRY

Coming out of the main building, starting across the bridge.

BRENDA

She runs past the first cottage on her left and goes out of the shot.

FREDERICK AND HARRY

Come running along the pathway towards the first cottage.

BRENDA (INTERCUT WITH HER P.O.V.)

She is hiding behind heavy foliage on one side of the cottage. Peering out, she SEES the two men run past her hiding place, slow down to a stop, peer about, then turn and start back in the direction they had come from. Brenda waits, hears no sound of the men, cautiously moves out of her hiding place, sees no sign of her pursuers, stealthily makes her way back along the footpath towards the main building. Suddenly the two men spring out at her from behind a clump of bushes. She whirls and runs from them, passing the cottage again, feeling the men gaining on her and out-flanking her on the right. She veers to her left, dashes past her hiding place out onto a very narrow, little used, precarious path, almost falls, keeps going, runs past the rocky hill on top of which is the diver's altar, and then comes to a sudden stop and reacts with dismay. She has come to the edge of the high diver's cliff.

BRIEF SHOT FROM BRENDA'S P.O.V.

We see the gorge way below, the Belvedere on the other side of the water, and to the left, La Perla and El Mirador's upper terrace.

BRENDA

Turns to face the two men.

FREDERICK AND HARRY

They come to a stop on the narrow, precarious path as the SEE Brenda trapped at the edge of the cliff, silhouetted against the sky.

BRENDA'S VOICE

Don't come near me...

The two men look at each other.

QUICK CUTS OF LA PERLA, THE STONE STEPS, THE BELVEDERE

Crowds turning, or rising to their feet, pointing to the cliff, uttering exclamations of wonder, bursting into applause (THEY THINK THEY ARE SEEING A PERFORMANCE), many of them taking pictures with telephoto lenses. Tony Mazzarini is seen on the stone steps looking up. The last cut shows Larry, in closeup, following the gaze of the others and SEEING:

BRENDA AND THE TWO MEN UP ON THE QUEBRADA (LARRY'S P.O.V.)

They are frozen for a moment, facing each other.

LARRY IN CLOSEUP

LARRY
(stunned)

Brenda...Jesus...

He quickly dashes across the Belvedere and up the stone steps, two at a time. Halfway up, he suddenly comes to a stop, looking up.

LARRY'S P.O.V.

Tony Mazzarini is standing directly in his path above him, looking down at him with a gun in his hand..

BRIEF SHOT - LARRY

Starts warily up the steps towards Mazzarini.

BRIEF SHOT - MAZZARINI

Seeing Larry coming, wheels to his right, raises the gun, holding it with both hands, and aims it carefully up across the gorge towards Brenda.

FLASH SHOT - LARRY

Now dashes up the steps towards Mazzarini.

FLASH SHOT - ON TOP OF THE QUEBRADA

Brenda, her back to the edge of the cliff (and to Mazzarini's distant gun) sees Frederick and Harry begin to move carefully towards her.

MAZZARINI ON THE STONE STEPS

He has Brenda in his sights, is about to squeeze the trigger. Larry comes hurtling into the shot, leaps on him. The two men crash to the stone floor and, locked in mortal struggle, start rolling over and over down the endless steps towards the Belvedere.

ON TOP OF THE QUEBRADA

Frederick and Harry come closer to Brenda and the suitcase. She looks about desperately, with no place to go. The men are having trouble with the precarious footing. They pause for a moment.

FREDERICK
(calls out)
Throw it to us...

BRENDA
Stay where you are...

The men start forward again.

THE BELVEDERE

Larry and Mazzarini come crashing down the steps onto the stone platform, struggling desperately for possession of the gun. Mazzarini breaks Larry's grip, clambers to his feet, rushes to the parapet, takes aim up at Brenda. At the last moment, Larry tackles him from the rear and brings him down.

ON TOP OF THE QUEBRADA

The men are about to reach Brenda at the edge of the cliff. There is nothing she can do, so she lunges forward into their grasping hands and breaks through their grip and dashes up the little steps to the rocky slope leading up to the altar. She clambers up the slope with the suitcase, reaches the altar, turns around with her back to it, and sees the two men at the foot of the slope looking up at her and preparing to make their move.

FLASH CUTS OF THE CROWDS APPLAUDING "THE PERFORMANCE", WITH AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS CLICKING AWAY.

THE BELVEDERE

Mazzarini and Larry are in the final throes of their struggle. Awed tourists watch them, uncertain of what this combat is all about (Is it staged? Is it real?) Larry kicks the gun out of Mazzarini's hand. It skitters across the stone platform. Both men clamber for it. Larry gets there first, seizes the gun, hurls it far and wide over the water. Enraged, Mazzarini charges at Larry, head down, crashes into him with all his weight and all his might and sends Larry hurtling over the parapet on the far side of the Belvedere.

THE OUTER GORGE

Larry comes tumbling down from the Belvedere and crashes into the swirling waters of the gorge far below, out of sight of the cliff on which Brenda is trapped. Near Larry's splashdown point, a twelve-year-old Mexican boy in a flat-bottomed motorboat reacts with surprise and steers towards him.

ON TOP OF THE QUEBRADA

Frederick starts up the left side of the slope towards Brenda at the altar, Harry from the right. The footing is bad, and they curse as they slip and slide.

FREDERICK
(to Brenda)

Throw it down, God damn it.
We won't touch you...

BRENDA
Don't come any closer...

The two men reach up and grab at her legs. She kicks their hands away. Harry manages to grip her skirt. She pulls back and the skirt comes off, revealing her briefs. The struggle intensifies. Brenda flails at the men, banging their heads with the suitcase, kicking and punching them. The only advantage she has is that she is above them looking down. But there are two of them, and they are too much for her, and they finally reach the top, and Harry has her in his grip now and Frederick is wresting the suitcase from her hands, but Brenda bites and kicks and squirms, and in the struggle her blouse gets ripped off and now she is only in her bra and briefs, and her fury gives her one final desperate burst of energy in which she tears the suitcase from Frederick's grasp and lunges out of Harry's arms and pushes both men back and turns and slides down the slope to the edge of the cliff, and with a mighty heave worthy of a decathlon champion she sends the suitcase flying out over the gorge and watches it sail through the air and down towards the water (WHERE A FLASH CUT SHOWS THE SUITCASE LANDING INTACT WITH A GREAT SPLASH JUST AS LARRY, IN THE MEXICAN BOY'S MOTORBOAT, APPEARS AROUND THE BEND AND ENTERS THE GORGE).

Brenda stands poised on the edge of the cliff looking down, her lips moving in a soundless prayer. The two men clamber down the slope and lunge for her just as she raises her arms, bends at the knees and springs from the cliff with a great leap, soaring out over the gorge in a perfect swan dive (WHICH WE SEE IN SLOW MOTION FROM THE P.O.V. OF LARRY IN THE MOTORBOAT NEAR THE BASE OF THE BELVEDERE, AND FROM THE P.O.V. OF THE AWED SPECTATORS ON THE TERRACES).

THE GORGE

Brenda comes down arms first, hits the water cleanly and knifes below the surface. Larry leaps out of the boat, seizes the floating suitcase, tosses it into the boat. Then Brenda comes shooting up out of the water. Larry seizes her, raises her out of the water and holds her triumphantly aloft. AND THE ONLOOKING CROWDS WILDLY CHEER AND APPLAUD.

LARRY
(to Brenda in a
TIGHT TWO SHOT)
Listen to that. You must have done
something right.

Right there in the water, they kiss, then climb into the boat. The grinning Mexican boy guns his motor, swerves the boat around, and speeds out of the gorge with his happy passengers (as we FLASH CUT TO MAZZARINI, halfway up the stone steps, looking down, cursing, then starting up).

EXT. ROAD ON OUTSKIRTS OF ACAPULCO - A FEW MINUTES LATER

We are MEDIUM CLOSE on an ARROWED SIGN. In two languages it says: "TO THE WHARF." We HEAR the ROAR of a CAR APPROACHING AT HIGH SPEED. It shoots past between CAMERA and sign, and CAMERA WHIPS LEFT IN time to catch Mazzarini's black Lincoln sedan speeding away.

INT. LINCOLN SEDAN IN MOTION

Frederick is driving. Harry is seated beside him. Mazzarini is in the back seat. All three are grim-faced.

MAZZARINI

Come on, God damn it, we have to
get to the landing before they do.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF SAME ROAD (HIGH UP OVER THE SEA)

Two Mexican motorcycle police are parked on either side of a wooden barricade that has been set up across the road, their police radios squawking a highway alert in Spanish... something about a black Lincoln sedan. The car in question suddenly appears around a bend, speeds towards the barricade and, despite the arm-waving police, smashes through the barrier and keeps going. The police quickly mount their motorcycles and take off after the car, SIRENS SCREAMING.

INT. LINCOLN SEDAN IN MOTION

Mazzarini turns, looks out of the rear window, SEES the motorcycle cops in pursuit. He turns away, growls at Frederick:

MAZZARINI

Can't you do anything right?
Lose them, lose them!

OBJECTIVE TRAVELING SHOT

The motorcycles are gaining rapidly on the speeding sedan.

INT. LINCOLN SEDAN IN MOTION

Mazzarini takes another look out of the rear window, turns forward and barks at Frederick:

MAZZARINI

I told you to lose them, didn't I?

QUICK INSERT

The albino's foot presses the accelerator pedal to the floor.

OBJECTIVE TRAVELING SHOT

The Lincoln surges forward at breakneck speed, suddenly comes upon a sharp hidden curve and goes shooting off the precipitous edge of the road, flying into the air over a canyon a thousand feet below.

INT. CAR SAILING THROUGH THE AIR.

MAZZARINI

(oblivious)

That's more like it.

LONG SHOT - THE CAR

Diving towards the canyon floor. Just as it hits the rocks, we HEAR THE BLAST OF THE QE2'S HORN, AS THOUGH IT WERE THE SOUND OF IMPACT.

EXT. ACAPULCO BAY - TWILIGHT

The BLAST OF THE HORN CONTINUES THROUGH THE CUT to a FULL SHOT OF THE QE2 slowly moving out across the bay.

JENNY AT THE RAIL ON THE QE2

Dressed for dinner, she is gazing off at the receding shoreline with a faraway look in her eyes. Dylan, also freshly groomed, comes into the shot from somewhere behind her and takes his place at her side, looking off.

DYLAN

(drily)

And so we say fond farewell to Acapulco. I never slept through a nicer day.

JENNY

(dreamily)

You don't know what you missed, Dylan. It was memorable...

DYLAN
 (with controlled
 surprise)
 Even without me?

JENNY
 Even without you.

DYLAN
 Are you going to tell me about it,
 Jenny?

JENNY
 I don't think so, darling. I think
 there are times when husbands and
 wives shouldn't tell each other
 anything...
 (she looks at him tenderly)
 Don't you agree?

Dylan meets her gaze and nods understandingly. And then
 he puts an arm around Jenny's waist, and she puts an arm
 around his, and they stand there feeling more happiness
 than they can possibly express.

CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY ALONG THE RAIL until Jenny and Dylan
 are out of the shot. And now BRENDA and LARRY come into
 the shot, also standing at the rail looking off thoughtfully,
 dressed nicely enough considering that the clothes are
 borrowed. After a few moments of silence:

LARRY
 (murmurs)
 Bet I know what you're doing.

BRENDA
 (dreamily)
 Bet you dinner tonight you don't.

LARRY
 You're writing the whole story in your
 head...headlines, captions, everything.

BRENDA
 (smiles, shakes her head
 slowly)
 There are more important things in
 life than making the front page, Larry.

Larry looks at her, immensely pleased.

LARRY
Anyone we know?

BRENDA
(gazes at him with
affection)
I'm just beginning to.

Larry returns her gaze, and the QE2 slowly glides them out of the shot.

INT. CITY ROOM OF THE FLASH - CHICAGO - DAY

With the tan leather suitcase in hand, Brenda steps out of the elevator and breezes across the corridor into the City Room, looking buoyant, radiant and cheerful. As she moves at a lively pace to the accompaniment of the usual wolf whistles and male choruses of "There she goes...Miss America...", copyboy Pesky Miller springs to her side saying:

PESKY
Brenda, you're back. Terrific...

BRENDA
(without breaking stride)
Hi, Pesky. What have I missed?

PESKY
(moving alongside her)
Not a darn thing. You know how dull it is around here without you.

Brenda stops outside Muggs Walters' office, holds up the suitcase.

BRENDA
Small favor?

PESKY
Anytime.

BRENDA
Will you grab a cab and return this to Arthur Paddington right away?
You know where the mansion is.

PESKY
(taking the suitcase)
Sure. What's in here?

BRENDA

Nothing but money. If he finds it a little damp, tell him I floated a loan.

PESKY

You floated a loan. Gotcha.

He goes off with the suitcase. Brenda enters Muggs Walters' office.

INT. MUGGS WALTERS' OFFICE

Editor Horace (Muggs) Walters is dictating to his veteran secretary, Miss Jennings, as Brenda barges in, talking as she enters:

BRENDA

On that story you wanted, Mr. Walters...
Hello, Miss Jennings...

MUGGS

What the hell are you doing here?
It's only three days. What kinda vacation is that? What story?

BRENDA

For the Society page? The Jennifer Paddington-Dylan Zweig engagement?

MUGGS

Oh, that one.

Brenda tosses the shipboard photograph on his desk.

BRENDA

There they are, honeymooning around the world on the QE2.

MUGGS

Honeymooning?
(he looks up from the picture)
So what's the rest?

BRENDA

That's it. That's the whole story.

MUGGS

(eyes narrowing)
Are you sure?

BRENDA

It's so simple you can write it yourself. Better yet, give it to Hank O'Hair.

MUGGS

Why not you?

BRENDA

I'm off again...to continue my vacation...

MUGGS

More vacation? Now where?

BRENDA

Sun Valley, Idaho. Unfinished business.

MUGGS

It's freezing there.

BRENDA

(smiling)

What do I care? I'm going there to melt.

She waves goodbye and hurries out. Muggs Walters looks at Miss Jennings and fingers a page proof on his desk.

MUGGS

Just as well she's going outta town. Maybe she won't see tomorrow's front page.

MISS JENNINGS

She'll be on every front page in the world, Mr. Walters. You know that.

Muggs picks up the page proof, looks down at it.

INSERT - PAGE PROOF

It is Page One of tomorrow's FLASH. Dominating the page is a large, eye-catching photograph of a beautiful girl, caught in mid-air in her bra and briefs, in the middle of a magnificent swan dive. The banner above the picture reads: ACAPULCO MYSTERY WOMAN MAKES DEATH-DEFYING LEAP IN HER UNDIES. The caption below the picture says: WHO IS THIS GIRL? AND WILL SOMEONE PLEASE BUY HER A BATHING SUIT?

ON A FREEZE FRAME OF THE INSERT:

THE CAST CRAWL BEGINS

(more)

(BUT IF YOU WANT TO GO ON...)

EXT. MICHIGAN BLVD., CHICAGO - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Brenda is walking briskly on her way to a limousine parked at the curb near the corner, CAMERA MOVING with her. Looking ahead, she SEES someone approaching from the opposite direction and her eyes widen, as though she is seeing a marvelous vision.

BRENDA'S MOVING P.O.V.

The object of Brenda's attention, coming from the opposite direction, is a handsome, dark-haired young man in a flowing black cape with a black patch over one eye. As he draws nearer, he turns his head slightly and shows the same kind of awesome interest in Brenda.

EXT. BOULEVARD

Brenda and the handsome stranger pass each other going in opposite directions, looking at each other with rapt gaze.

MOVING CLOSE SHOT - BRENDA

Her eyes sparkle. Her face is suffused with excitement. She slows down, turns to take another look.

BRENDA'S P.O.V.

We are FAIRLY CLOSE on the man's back as he walks on. Clearly seen on the back of his flowing black cape are the large white letters that say: ZORBA'S -- FOR THE BEST STEAK IN TOWN.

BRENDA IN MOTION

Only for a moment is she disappointed. Then she smiles broadly, genuinely amused, and quickly dismisses the episode from her mind. Her expression is utterly cheerful as she arrives at the limousine and opens the back door.

CLOSE ON THE LIMOUSINE

Larry is in the back seat, waiting, as Brenda gets in, sits down beside him and closes the door.

LARRY

What are you smiling about?

BRENDA

(happily)

Nothing...

(she keeps smiling)

Everything...

Then the limousine pulls away, and the CAMERA PANS with it, and we keep watching the car until Brenda finally disappears in the traffic, on her way to other adventures.

FADEOUT

THE END



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